# Webinar Transcript

# What’s Your Story with Rikki Corniola

**[Megan, moderator]** Work Backwards from your Goals to Identify Data points and Evidence to Support your Writing Center by Dr. Rikki Corniola. And today's webinar is hosted by the Online Writing Centers Association. I'm Megan and I'm the moderator for today's presentation. Facilitating along with me today is Duane Theobald, Jill Dahlman, and Elle Tyson; all three of them will be monitoring the chat. So just keep that in mind. If you do run into any technical issues, feel free to send me a chat message and I'll try to help you get that figured out. Or if you're not in the call anymore, you can email us at events@onlinewritingcenters.org. So Rikki is joining us from California Northstate University. And Rikki is an associate professor of biomedical studies and the Assistant Dean for curriculum and assessment. And we're really excited about this session. And we're thrilled to have Rikki here with us today.

So before I hand things over to Rikki, I just want to go over a couple of housekeeping issues. Please note that we are recording, and that the recording will be posted on our website about a week after this webinar ends with captions and a transcript for accessibility. We have American Sign Language interpreters from Morr Interpreting in this session. Thank you both for being here. So please let us know in the chat, if you cannot see or find the interpreters at any time during the meeting. Your audio and video were automatically turned off when you entered the webinar today. And we just ask that you keep them turned off, unless you're called upon to share or to ask a question later on in the webinar. And this is just to minimize visual and auditory distractions and make sure that folks can find the interpreters. So you are welcome and encouraged to post comments, questions and participate in the chat. So our chat moderators will be compiling questions you ask in the chat to share with Rikki. And any questions that we don't have time to address during the webinar will still be given to Rikki after the discussion. And hopefully, she'll be able to follow up with those things. And we'll be able to share those responses with you afterwards if for some reason we can't get to it. If at any point Rikki asks for folks to jump into the discussion, we just ask that you use the raise hand feature in zoom. And so you can access this feature by clicking the reactions button in the menu and then clicking raise hand. And then we'll have someone call on you so that you can unmute yourself and share your video if you'd like to.

Alright, and the last thing I just wanted to share some information about another webinar we have coming up next month on August 24 at 1pm. Eastern, Dr. Clarissa Walker will present Story Culture Live: Homegrown Storytelling as Actionable Anti-Racism Work, and Clarissa will introduce the components of the story culture live framework, agency, kinship, tensions and identification and offer anecdotal examples from her story culture live podcast to illustrate the framework and use. And finally Clarissa will lead a group activity that applies these actionable anti-racism principles to writing to your clients sessions. So keep an eye out for that registration, which will come out soon. And we hope that you'll join us for that webinar as well. So I'm going to go ahead and turn things over to Rikki.

## Introduction [Slides 1-3]

**[Rikki, presenter]** Hello, everyone, I am very excited to be here. This is super fun. I'm seeing that there are participants all over the country. I even saw somebody from Sao Paulo. So welcome. And I'm going to just– I'll post up my slides. I just as if I were teaching, I keep my slide not on Presenter View. So I apologize for those of you that like the full screen. But just to give you a heads up, it's not a ton of slides. Not a ton of text. But I do want to have a lot of discussion today. So feel free to use the reactions, to raise hands, get involved, comment in the chat. I want this to be really interactive, because from my perception, I was asked to come and give you advice on how to help you tell your story to your administrators to support your writing center. So what is your story? That's the first thing that I could think of when I was asked how do you assess a writing center? How do you get support for your writing center? How do you make a case for your writing center? And so much of that I think is telling your story. It's identifying who you are and the populations that you serve the questions that you're asking. And we'll go through a bit of this today. So I'll first give you a little bit of an introduction about me. I am an associate professor of biomedical sciences, I trained in the life sciences. Throughout college and graduate school, I pursued postdoctoral research at Stanford, at their school of medicine in the Department of Neurology. And then I joined my current institution to help them build curriculum for the medical school and the undergraduate program. Throughout that I've been working kind of in a lot of different departments, but usually in the realm of assessing functionality of different components of the curriculum of the Student Services of Admissions in many different departments. So I'm familiar with working with Dr. Dahlman who has founded our online writing center. And we work very closely together to understand the utility of it for our students, how to grow it, and how there are multiple populations that we're serving, not just the students that we're trying to help become better writers, but the students that do have proficiencies, how we can help them grow as peer tutors, and instructors. So we'll talk a little bit about that today. Then, I'm going to I'll after this brief introduction, I'll follow through with some questions for you guys. So that's where I hope you get involved. And then we'll talk about how to construct your story, how to tell your story. Now I sent out a call and I was told I was crazy. But that's okay. That if anybody wanted to write a short justification statement, and have it reviewed, right, so I don't know if you would be if you're, if that's necessary for your departments, or for your writing centers within your administration. But I think of it as kind of a snapshot of what you're, what you're providing the services, how to package that data into an elevator pitch in short writing, so that you can communicate why it's so important to have your writing centers and all of the resources that they provide. So that if you went ahead and did that, you can email that to me, I'm happy to look it over and then provide direct feedback on questions that from an administrator’s perspective that I would ask. And then that helps to compile how to tell your story. And then we sent out or your community sent out a questionnaire of what types of questions did you want answers to. What were things that you were currently thinking about? What you know, what can I actually help you with? And so I have a list of questions that were asked. And I'm hopeful to be able to respond, if not directly to them indirectly, through answers to other questions, so that everybody will leave here with the answers that they want, or at least an idea of how to go about getting them. And then we'll just conclude and have some more open discussion. So in an introduction here showing and telling your story, there were a few things that I wanted to point out is that the need for quantitative data aren't going to go away, because that's typically what administrators use to justify budget lines.

So if you need funding for your resource center, your writing center, then your most of the time justification is going to come through those quantitative datasets of how many students are using it, what are they using it for? What's the population of the students? What are the demographics? Are they you know, if you're at a community college, you know, is it mostly first time students? Or are they continuing students? What populations are they representing? Or do they identify as? and so then, you can build a bigger picture and provide more justification upwards through offices of finance and business, to secure that funding within your departmental budgets. But just as the quantitative data needs aren't gonna go away, you have to bring the humanity. You have to make a story, you have to make it compelling. And ultimately, if you're serving in an institution of higher education, you're there to serve your students. Right. Number one goals should be students' success, how are you helping them to prepare for the next stages of their careers and lives? So that can't be limited to just how many times did they come use the writing center? It's getting to know who who is using the writing center? Why are they using it? Or why are they not using the writing center. But learning about these stories and being able to communicate those, I feel is also important. And so you have to balance the data. You have to pull the different resources together to build a convincing and compelling story as to why you need the resources that you need. Whether that's just funding at all, or it's additional technology or its staff, whatever it may be. So my objective for today was to help everyone here find the bridge between the needs and wants of their individual writing center and the resource pool. Right? So how do you get the resources that you need to address your needs and wants for your writing center. So, a few things that I wanted to help you identify were determine your discrete objectives. So if you have specific, if you have specific technology that you want for your writing center, if you have a specific staff position, or a specific set of resources, being really clear with what your wants and needs are, will help you develop your narrative, right. So that's the second point under there. By knowing what you want and what you need, you can create your argument using the data to support it. And use varied types of data. So this goes back to using those quantitative and those qualitative types of data, right? So your usage rates, and we'll get into other examples of types of data, but being able to package all of that together.

## Questions for the Audience [slide 4]

So before I start getting into the different, like, how to tell your story, I did want to pose some questions for the audience. And so this is where we're going to start to get interactive here. Does anybody feel comfortable explaining what they want for their writing center?

You can put it in the chat, and that's totally fine. So are you looking for a specific technology? Are you looking for staff positions? Are you looking for dedicated university space? That these are,when I when I asked the question of when I was asked the question of resources, that's what I think, oh, like are you going for dedicated teaching time for faculty that might support it? So staff staff staff? Okay, that's good. continued funding, support having writing center open in the summer, especially for graduate student clients. Okay, making tutor training part of the curriculum, your opportunities for raises and responsibilities. Okay. So staffing seems to be a consistent issue. And in order to keep a writing center open during the summer, you would need the funding for the staff, I presume, if increasing student client usage to justify the need for staffing growth. Okay, we're working on a more appealing space on campus. Okay. Personnel and space, particularly that meet accessibility needs. Okay. Okay, so these are great things. So, within that, now that we have these questions of what specifically you want, I recommend that you make a list, right? So we can copy from this chat, and you can prioritize what your lists are. But I see, for me, staffing is one of the major concerns, like resources or funding available to actually pay staff. That seems to be a common thread. So my question is, what is your structure then for requesting resources? So how do you go about asking for resources? Or requesting them? Is it a request to your department chair? Is it a request to your dean? Is it you send a budget request to the dean. Okay. So within that budget request, do you have to provide a justification for what you're asking for? I'm assuming that you do, of course. But within the structure of a budget request, there could be potentially a lot of freedom. And it may just be oh, well, I need this. I need this staff person for you know, 10 hours a week at such and such rate for the year, or, you know, whatever whatever it might be. I think that being able to pull the data that are going to specifically support the staffing requests, because that seems to be our main issue here. Or facilities request that is going to influence the all of the data that you're going to put into your request to your dean, or it looks like we have somebody that has to request the Vice Provost who tells you to ask the accountant raises concerns over any expense. That's great. And that's totally true. And we understand that too. Which is why we're going to talk about data and a little bit for how you like to borrow how you can justify the purchase of TikTaks. No, I'm just kidding. Staff. We're not talking about TikTaks, we’re talking about people. And people can be expensive in regards to resources, depending upon the structures, so thinking about potential structures of independent contractors versus part time or adjunct faculty, it also depends on the structure of your writing center, whether you can hire peer tutors, or student service workers, faculty, so getting creative about ways to mitigate exorbitant expenses, and build that into your argument as a cost savings technique. Right? So at Dr. Peck says at your institution, most requests go all the way to the top, so you make the request to the Associate Provost who then pushes it to the provost, who then pushes it to the President. And so I think that we have a similar structure here at our university. So our, our faculty can make requests to the department chairs or to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, and then that request can get evaluated by our Dean's community, and then put into the budget for the next funding cycle, which will then eventually have to get approved all the way up through the office of the president. So my next question is, what are the barriers that you see to your center’s success? Right, so you want more staffing? And you understand the mechanisms for how to request those funds? What do you see as the things that are getting in the way of accessing those funds?

So my first inclination is that it's going to be, most businesses don't want to spend money that isn't essential, so that they can use it for growth opportunities. sustained operations. so lack of support for Okay, lack of funds altogether at your institution, the invisible nature, the work and horizontal expertise in the face of a system that rewards vertical expertise. And my ask a little bit more explanation on that lack of support for learning services from faculty and Chancellor, the view that students needing tutoring of any forms means you're dumb or bad. And I have a point to this as a way to kind of change the narrative on tutoring services, I don't necessarily see it as I can, I guess I can see the perspective of the of meaning that the writing center is for tutoring. But it's much broader than that, in my mind. The writing center is not directly about improving samples of writing or creating better writers. It's a way to create community and the institution that aligns towards a focused goal of preparing your students for success beyond their walls. Right. So in order to be successful, once you leave an institution, you have to be able to communicate, you have to be able to communicate well. So our writing center is actually what we call our media and communications studio. And it's not just about tutoring, but it's about providing a variety of resources that are necessary and integrate with assignment structure, Signature Assignment structures in the college. So we're encouraging our faculty to build in referrals within their classes to the media and communication center, so that they can, I don't want to say relieve themselves of the extra work to improve student's writing. But they can take stuff off their plate, and they can say, Okay, well, this is our assignment. This is the rubric. These are the things that I expect from this work. Now go to the Media and Communication Center, and start your outline, start your brainstorming, let's go through this iterative process of writing for whatever the objective may be, whether it's writing to learn, or it's writing within the discipline, or it's writing to engage with a particular community in all formats. So whether it's scientific writing, or writing for lay populations, it's still all writing and it doesn't mean that it's tutoring, right. It's supplemental instruction. So I would coin terms in that way to make it appeal to a broader audience to show that you're providing supplemental instruction and you're supporting co-curricular development and so, at our college, yes, we have curricular outcomes that we have to address. So we're regionally accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. And they have five core competencies that we have to address within our curriculum because we're an undergraduate program. Written communication is one of them. And so, in addition to those curricular outcomes, we also have co-curricular outcomes. And as a college, we decided what those were going to be. And the co-curricular outcomes, we do have communication outcomes, because we find it essentially important for our students to be able to communicate as future health care professionals because we are a health sciences focused institution. So we spend a lot of time demonstrating or trying to demonstrate why our student services are not expendable, right? We have populations that need to interact professionally, through, I guess, all through very diverse populations, we’ll say that. So let me scroll down and look at some more messages here. Declining enrollment means tightening budget, and that's true. Declining enrollment means tightening budget because the less money that's coming into an institution means the less money available for resources, right. And so whether that's people resources, or space resources, or beautification resources, technology resources, less money, less tuition, dollars, fewer tuition dollars coming into the institution means that there's going to be less money available to spend unless you have a very large endowment.

At our university, we don't have that. We take spending very, they're very, very tight with all the pennies. Because every tuition dollar creates our budget. And so we want to be mindful of how we're spending our students' investment in their education. That's not to mean that we don't support initiatives, so not aligning with the institution's five year plan was assigned, or was identified as a potential barrier. And so my recommendation for that particular instance, Professor Yin, is to look at your institution's five year plan. If student success is a part of that five year plan and educational effectiveness, then figuring out how you can measure those things from your writing center are going to be very, very important. And I'm happy after this to discuss with anyone in brainstorm and strategize for how you can help create your story. So then, so we've talked a little bit about what you specifically want for your writing centers, which would be staff, that seems to be the major resource. And more staff means more availability for students to utilize the services continued, like continuity and program delivery. We've identified barriers, that seems to be money for most institutions which makes sense. We see alignment with institutional objectives, maybe that's in question. We can see maybe negative perceptions of what the writing center is actually doing for your institution. And I think that a lot of the way that negative perceptions can be dispelled is through incorporating effective pieces of data to support your arguments. And so I guess my question, my next question, which will kind of set up a lot of what I want to talk about coming up is, why do you feel that your current data do not effectively support your story?

And some, I think might feel, well, I don't even know where to start with collecting data. I don't know what data you speak of. Then it could be that you're just at a loss, you still need to start by explaining what you do. Okay, well, that's, that's great. So, identifying, being able to effectively communicate the services that you offer. It takes time, right? It takes a dedicated amount of time to sit down and think, what do we offer? What is my inventory of materials? What are my staff doing? Like if you have staff in your writing center, what are your staff doing? Um, so let's see here. Let's see what some others in the comments want to say. Let's see. Okay.

**[Ruth, attendee]** If I, if I can speak up if that's okay. Can you all hear me?

**[Rikki, presenter]** Yeah

**[Ruth, attendee]** Yeah. Okay, so there's a comment saying that, you know, we're siloed from campus data, the campus data stream, which is kind of where we're at. And one thing is, is, it's like, one thing that I've heard, and it's really difficult to do is like tracking, for example, individual students. Let's say they're like, they're, they've been flagged for whatever reason is at risk. And then they work with us and like being able to track that is a data like logistical nightmare. And so that was that something that's kind of come up. So like, we have some data in terms of who's using it, and whatnot, but then in terms of their success rate, that's incredibly difficult to track. And so that's something that I wanted to bring up. I'm not sure if other people are facing that. But that was like an idea. And something I'd seen, but I was like, Oh my gosh, like to do that we'd have to sit there and get like, you know, like the X reports, the W, what is called the, the withdrawal, Fail, and D reports. And then we have to track that alignment with our data that we collect separately, and then see whether or not they use our services, how much you know, and like all of that, and it's, it's kind of insane.

**[Rikki, presenter]** What do you have a student information like, which student information system do you use?

**[Ruth, attendee]** Um, so I think that that data is pulled from, we just migrated to something called I think, anthology or something. But like, on our side, we use WConline.

**[Rikki, presenter]** Okay, so we use WConline, too. And so one of the ways that we've structured the signup and the registration for WConline is that we have students inputting their student ID numbers. And so when you extract the data from WConline, and you have that, that giant CSV file, it's, it's very interesting, because and Jill, you can correct me if I misspeak here, but one of the things that I love to do, because I have to provide a board of trustees reports every, like every quarter. So, and one of the things that I report on is the usage of our WC platform, because I actually use it for a variety of sources, not just for writing center. It’s great for that, but I use it for academic advising. So within that, when students sign up for an appointment, they have to identify like, what you know which schedule they're gonna go to. So we've got the writings and communication in the meeting communication students with academic advising, but then when they try to schedule an appointment, they have to answer why they're there, right, so we give them a few different options of why they're there. And then I can extract those data by these downloads, and I can provide those discrete data points to show that, you know, we've had 300 appointments in the last six months, 50% of those appointments came from freshmen that were enrolled in, like the English Composition series. But then we saw, you know, the other 50% was fairly equally distributed amongst the, you know, the upperclassmen and our Postback students, for a variety of different, you know, reasons. And I don't know if anybody here is familiar with Power BI. So Power BI is a business intelligence software from Microsoft. So if you're a Microsoft institution, then it's data visualization. So you can create from that CSV file, if you are able to ge,t and it might be difficult because of FERPA, if you are able to get performance information, and this might have to go through an assessment office, or Dean's level office just for need to know purposes and then have the like a summary report, requests a summary report from your your dean's office, you could track improve student performance over time. And so I use, I administer an early Academic Alert System where I'm able to do that. But you can connect data, you can make relationships based on a key category, which is the student ID, that might have to happen at a higher level because of need to know purposes. If you wanted to measure the effectiveness of specific services within your writing center. For individual students, it's going to be looking at work samples, right, direct student work samples and finding a way to collect those data. Now do you have– what learning management system do you use? We use Canvas.

**[Ruth, attendee]** Yeah, Canvas. Um, well, I don't have access to Canvas. I mean, I do, but I don't have access to the data on Canvas.

**[Rikki, presenter]** But you might be able to find a way to get around that. By working with whoever your administrator is, and seeing if you can- Do you have a central writing center resource on Canvas, like every student can be enrolled in it? This is just a brainstorming idea here. So this is, I'll let you know, this is how I think I like to throw ideas out and see how people are thinking about things. So, I'll give an example of something that's been really useful for me. We're a very young institution, and we needed to create a way that we could have our entire population of students, which is only a few 100 students, so for 1000s upon 1000s of students, it might be different. But we create a Canvas page for our academic and student affairs that every student is enrolled in, in the college longitudinally, so they always have access to it, it's always on their dashboard. And so we have our academic policies, we create assignments for, you know, anything that they may need, whether they want to withdraw from a course, or they want to, you know, during the add drop period, they want to add and drop something, if they need to, you know, submit their petition to graduate, all these things, because we're interacting with different departments within the university. But we put a lot of resources on that Canvas page and make them accessible for students. And so if you have a central website, or even a Canvas page that's longitudinally on a student's dashboard, you might consider getting included within that from your writing center perspective, and then creating outcomes. Right? So for the students that are attending the writing center, and utilizing the resources direct with a tutor, right, with a staff member, that's there, you could easily create an assignment within a module for a writing center or some separate function, if you're just going to make a writing center Canvas page, right, you can create assignments, and you can attach outcomes to those assignments and have students just submit the samples through that assignment. Using easy grader functions, you can attach rubrics, you can actually measure direct performance of students that are just attending the writing center, because it doesn't have to be for a class, right so that they can still submit the work for class. But while you're working with a given student, if you wanted to have them submit their work through this function, then you can easily build rubrics based on outcomes that are programmed within Canvas. And then you can actually extract those data for institutional reporting purposes. And it makes it really, really simple. I've built the outcomes structure within our Learning Management System canvas here for the college. And we work with faculty for institutional reporting on their outcomes directly through this learning management system. It centralizes all data collection, and it's easily accessible from at least my office. And then faculty can see. And this is really a cool thing, because anybody that has Canvas, that if you're programming outcomes, any student that's enrolled and their work is assessed using those programming outcomes, you can enable what's called a learning management dashboard. Or Learning Mastery it’s the Learning Mastery Gradebook. And in that learning mastery gradebook, you can get a hotspot, you can get a heat map of how students are performing with different outcomes. So if your accrediting body says you have, you know, competencies A, B, C, and D that you need to make sure that you're assessing students on. Well, yeah, you're going to be assessing those within the classes. But if you have co-curricular or support services, that need to be assessing these outcomes, you can get creative and you utilize a canvas based system to do that as well. There's nothing that restricts you from being able to do that unless you don't have the access to it. But um, that's a fun thing that I can talk offline about and get jazzed all about that and help you brainstorm if you like. But I think, you know, there's, I think that there are lots of ways to collect the data and looking at direct samples of student work. And I think that those are often data pieces that are missing, right? So whether it's like a personal statement that students are working on, or it's an assignment within a class that they're working on writing a research paper or it's a lab report for us. So we have a very writing intensive curriculum. And it's, it is writing to learn. It's writing within the disciplines, it's writing to engage with the material for varied audiences. And so we have- we're constantly referring students in every class to the writing center.

**[Ruth, attendee]** I'm sorry to interrupt, but I'm wondering that it sounds to me like a way to kind of and this is, I think, a really helpful tip that I'm hearing is, to offset kind of the numbers is to have like, almost like samples of kind of progress, right? Because I mean that I can definitely pull pretty easily. Because I almost felt like I had to kind of track all the students that were you know, for whatever reason in that, you know, DFW report. And then or W, I forgot that acronym. And then you know, from there, you know, who has used our services. And from there, you know, who has improved or stayed or whatever, you know, it's kind of like a retention piece. And it's coming from so many different places, but from what I'm hearing from you is, it sounds like a way to kind of go around that is to say, you know, here is a student who came out in that report, who has used our services, here's a writing sample from before, here's a writing sample after look at the improvement, that's sort of…

**[Rikki, presenter]** I think individual proof of principle examples are effective, because they help you create your story. Now, that may not be sufficient according to your, you know, your institution, if that's the only thing that you're reporting on. But I think it's definitely a necessary part of the picture, it's a necessary part of telling that story of this is a student that used our services for this specific purpose, this is what they came in with, and this is what they left with. Right? And maybe it's an appendix to a document that you have to submit, or they're just snippets of a single paragraph that saw revisions, or as an outline for something. But it makes it tangible. And, you know, administrators aren't necessarily going to spend hours upon hours upon hours reading, you know, just a large number of student work samples, but having student work samples and showing the effectiveness of the services is really, really important. I think that if you could find a bigger picture way to capture the data, I think, you know, if Canvas is your learning management system, we can, I can help you think of how you might be able to utilize that, in order to do that, that does get down to the nitty gritty of who the students are. And when you extract the outcomes data from Canvas for that particular course, you can link the students that attended the writing center, with the students that are and their performance on those outcomes by their student ID number. So you can build that relationship in a software Power BI, that will then say, all the times that that student went to the writing center, and then these are the work samples, and then this is how it was assessed with the outcome. So it builds it for you. Right? So there is a way to do it. But it's just one way. But a lot of it will deal with permissions and that type of thing. But in the meantime, yes, use student work samples, right? And then what's the outcome of that student? Did they graduate? Did they get a job? Did they go to medical school? You know what I mean? Like trying to find out and solicit feedback from your writing center alumni, right? So the people that use the writing center, what were they doing, right? And where did they end up? That's really effective. And then, if you feel like your data aren't [ah, sorry] if you feel like your data aren't effectively supporting your story, it's, well, let's take a picture of what are your data? Like, you need to actually look at your data and say, what are the data that we are collecting? What do they say, interpret those results out of context? Right? If you're collecting usage data, then that's all you have, right? You say, I had this number of students use the service from this date to this date. And just break it down without interpreting it, right? Without putting it in context, you're just gonna say, these are my data, these are the results, write the results as if you're writing like a scientific article, you're gonna you know, you don't put it in context until after you say, this bar is bigger than this bar. And then we'll tell you why that's important in a minute, and then making sure that you know what the story is that you want to tell. Right? But that goes back to what do you specifically want? Right? So the story that you want to tell is that your writing center is really effective, but it could be even better if you had more people. Right? We could serve more students if we had more people. So my hat as an administrator, what I'll say is, well, how many students are you actually serving now? How effective are the services that you're providing now? Is there a way that you can show me that you have waitlists, and you can have waitlists on my WC. So that's an important data piece. So if you can say that there's a demand for the services that's not being met, then you might be able to make that argument that you need more resources, so that demand can be met. And it's being met effectively. Currently, we are missing the student population. So getting that data which you can collect from IWC. Alright, I think that that's, you know, for those of you that are using WC this is- I really love that data extraction. I'm working with that quite a lot to make arguments. And let's see what I'm missing over here. Let's see.

Wondering about privacy considerations more broadly, not all students want it widely known that they are using support services like writing center? Well, I think that part of that comes from rebranding. So I'll just address that. I think that one of the things that we've done really well here at California North State, is that our writing center is our media and communications center. And so it's that's just what it is. And it's not for tutoring purposes. This is a general support services. So in academic advising, we're referring, in classes, we're referring, and it's not just to students that maybe you're underperforming, it's everybody. Everybody can do better, everybody can improve their personal statements, every- even if you think you're gonna get an A on a research paper, you can bring that to the media and communication center and get feedback, you can find ways to improve, it doesn't mean that- nobody's perfect. Okay. And that's something that you know, nobody's trying to be perfect. We're all trying to improve the way that we communicate, we're all trying to make sure that we're getting our message across, we're trying to make sure that we're clear and concise with what we have to say. And so I think that maybe rebranding the purpose of your writing center is something that people should think about, because it's not, it's not just tutoring, you're filling so many more needs, you know? And I'm happy to brainstorm about that with you. If you have questions on, well, how do we rebrand? And then my question is, how do you collect your data? So for those of you that have a learning management system, where you're integrated, your writing center is integrated in that Canvas is a great way to collect data, my WC, if you're using myWConline, then that's a phenomenal tool to collect data. And we can kind of talk about the different fields that we have, and how we're collecting those data, and actually utilizing them.

## How to Tell the Story [slide 5]

And then let's move on to how you actually tell your story. So when you're making your pitch, and this is why I kind of provided that little pre assignment, if anybody wanted to do it, you start with your expectations provided to you, right? So what are your administrators and the people that are holding the purse strings, what are they saying are the expected goals and outcomes and benchmarks for your writing communication center? Right. So if you know what your expectations are, and if you don't know what they are, if nobody's communicated those to you, that's a great opportunity to start talking. It's a great opportunity to go to your department chair or to your dean, and say, let's get on the same page, Can I schedule a meeting with us to learn more about what you expect from our writing center and what your vision of our writing center is, because it could be really simple that there just isn't clear communication. I have found over the years that many times when I think I'm doing a great job, that maybe I had an unclear picture of what the expectations actually were. Or maybe I found that I had an unclear perception of what the expectations were. But it was an opportunity for me to educate. There was an opportunity for me to change the opinions of what those expectations were, and to change those expectations. Because maybe there's data or there's history, or there's evidence, from the literature as to the effectiveness of writing centers, and how they create more of a culture within the institution. And that maybe you're not necessarily just looking for better examples and samples of writing, but creating better writers. And so that's a good question for everybody to ask themselves. Are we trying to just create better writing at our institution? Or are we trying to educate and train better writers? Right? And so there's, that's kind of like a question for you to kick around. But I- open communication, I think, is super important. And so when you can identify what those expectations on your writing center are, from whoever is holding those purse strings, and the powers that be in the chain of command to get there, then you can compare that to what your expectations are.

They may be very different. And that may be a talking point right there. Now, you can also ask in those conversations for what types of data are you wanting to see from our writing center to demonstrate how effective we are or that's kind of leading, but what are they looking for? Right because if you ask that question, it's not like we have these assignments from an administrative perspective, I don't necessarily want to say like, oh, go fill out this form and then bring this back to me, and then that will determine your budget line. I mean, if you want to make a request, then yeah, they're going to be specific things you have to fill out. But a lot of times, we need to see why things are important. We need to see the different data points we need to see- We need to see the evidence, right. And so if it's an opportunity to educate on what those effective pieces of evidence are, take it. Now, if you need to, then go back and say, well, this, these are the data points that are expected of me, like I have to use that quantitative data, I told you, it's not going to go away. Right? So I need to look at the usage marks, I need to look at the, improve student performance. But it's- you need to align whatever those measures are, with the expectations, right, so make sure that you're addressing all of the expectations, or if you've had an opportunity to re-educate, then whatever the new expectations are, right. And if you can't collect the data to support your justifications, or to support your need for resources, then you need to really think about the story and the justification for that because enrollments are dwindling. And that means that resources are dwindling, too. So you need to be able to explain why you can't collect certain pieces of data, and what might be necessary or develop a workaround. One thing that we do really well at this college is that when we don't have the answers to our problems, we always try to propose a solution. Right? We try to so if we can't directly address it, then we'll try. Okay, well, let's try this way. Let's brainstorm. Let's strategize. Let's see how we can address this thing. And go back and then once you've collected all of these different points, review, look it over, think about it, identify the gaps, right? identify what's missing from your perspective. And it's easy to be very emotionally invested in this thing you're so passionate about. But taking a step back and thinking, Well, what am I not addressing? Right? What am I missing from my picture from my story here? And then try to fill the gaps with the data that you have. Or explain how going forward you're going to fill those gaps. I think that that's an interesting approach.

## Direct and Indirect Data Sources [slide 6]

Now if we go on, and we start looking at direct and indirect data sources. Our Media and Communication Center is not just one-on-one peer tutoring, we have a lot of faculty tutors. So Dr. Dahlman has created a really great network of volunteer faculty, because we have so much writing within our curriculum. Faculty are just inherently invested in making sure their students are successful, and so they'll contribute regular allotments of time to go in. So one of the areas for growth for us is to develop a really clear training system for those faculty volunteers, because a lot of this is going to be dependent upon their expertise for writing within their disciplines. So chemists, biologists, geneticists, that's gonna be writing within their disciplines for lab reports and research papers and that type of stuff. But in addition to that, we have a lot of, I want to say consumable resources. So we have podcasts, we have videos, we have blogs. These are all things that you can get that quantitative type data from, right. So if you have podcasts, you can actually quantify the numbers of playthroughs. Right? If you have videos embedded on a website, you can quantify the number of playthroughs for those videos. Likewise, for blogs, how many impressions, how many read throughs.

Now you can get student satisfaction survey data. So I know, some of you had mentioned that you needed to revamp your student satisfaction survey, definitely providing an opportunity for a narrative response. So making them short, and provide an opportunity for a testimonial or a narrative response. That would be really effective, because that gets those quotes. It gets that story-building from students’ perspective, and it can be leading, so it's like how effective was the- tell us about your experience with your assignment and you know, the help you received at the writing center. And then it's optional if they want to fill it out, but that at least gives them direction to do so. You can look at page accesses in Canvas so that for the Academic and Student Affairs Canvas page, I look at page access. I look at the analytics and I try to pull that so I can see which resources are being used most frequently by students, and then I know oh, I need to build on this, this is a direction that I need to take to suit a need, because there's a demand for it. Now, direct assessment is going to be that work, it's going to be those student work samples and tallying it and looking at it. So there's lots of ways to do it. And I think rubric based mechanisms are the easiest way to do it. And I love Canvas for that purpose. So if there's a way that you can integrate that into your online writing center structure, then I would recommend that.

## Conclusions [slide 7]

Conclusions? Identify your specific targets, know what you want, reflect on the identity of your writing center, your goals, purposes, expected outcomes. And so in- when I say that I say that very broadly, because what might need to end up happening is a rebranding so that it becomes more of a necessary student service for everybody, as opposed to a tutoring services just for those students that are underperforming. If you can create a broader audience, then you can demonstrate a greater need, right? If you can create resources to support everybody, whether they're proficient at writing or not, then that really cements you within the culture. And I think we've done that really well here at our institution. You want to make sure that the evidence that you're collecting are supporting your story, right, so looking at those direct and indirect data points. And once you figure out what they are, and you're collecting those data reliably, then you can interpret them and liken them back to that broader scope of a communication center or a media and communication center or your online writing center. And then tell that story to any and everyone. Right, you want to get your message across. So when I say that, I mean, you're going to tell faculty, you're going to tell students, you're going to walk office to office, you can put it on your social media, you can connect with your student organizations. You want to really demonstrate the work and effort that you're putting into things and how it's going to help people. If you can make it really clear that this is our story, this is where we came from, this is our direction, look at how useful we are, we can be useful for you, too. Then it's kind of like a sales pitch. But it will, I think, increase the usage of your writing center and broaden the scope of the audience.

So with that I have taken up almost all the time chatting with you. I'm going to go through and just read some of the quick points here and make sure that I've hit on what people wanted me to hit on particularly. So the first point was, how can you meaningfully convey anecdotal or non quantitative data to administrators who want exclusively quantitative data, especially since the quantitative data you have doesn't tell the full story. And so I just immediately started asking questions, why don't the quantitative data tell the story? What are the data actually telling you? What is the story that you want to tell? And so thinking about if your administrators are really only looking for that quantitative data, then finding out exactly what quantitative data you have? And the story that they actually tell? And then seeing, are there opportunities for me to collect quantitative data in other realms or other data points that maybe they weren't asking for, but are quantitative data that could be useful in creating your story?

So, that's where I would go with that. And then, what are the primary learning outcomes you've identified for tutorials? And what direct indirect methods do you use to measure those outcomes, specifically for student learning outcomes for accreditation, and continuous improvement processes? So like I said earlier, we're accredited by WASC. And our core competencies that we have to address as an undergraduate school are information literacy, critical thinking and written communication. Those are the ones that I think are most aligned with the writing center as a student support service. And so we do that didactically within the courses and a lot of those assignments that are within the courses, we then refer to the writing center for students to get support and some courses will actually require students to attend the writing center and show evidence of that as an assignment. And so I think that that's a really great way. I think also if you have an institutional rubric for the whatever competencies that you have for accreditation purpose, then using those rubrics, getting a committee together to address student work samples, so knowing which classes things are coming from knowing, having the rubric like so having the assignment description, having examples of student work, and then having a committee address those examples of student work, assess those work samples with the institutional rubrics. And you can collect that data through a Canvas site easily. Or even not, if you don't want to have to use Canvas, you can just have that meeting but making sure that there is this oversight of student work. That evidence is super, super important to demonstrate effectiveness of your writing center. Let’s see, going beyond metadata or data that values qualitative and quantitative data, I wasn't really sure how to respond to that question directly. And then what are some different data points that others have used to research the writing center interested in effectiveness as well as satisfaction? One I woke up in the middle of the night last night thinking of an interesting question. For writing centers that use a peer tutor model, I really think it would be interesting to look at both sides of the kind of the server/served relationship, looking at how students are actually improving their performance, because they have a peer tutor? And then how is the peer tutor performance improving? Right. And there's all sorts of different facets that you can ask within those questions. But not just thinking about the students, the students that are going to receive the services. But what about the students that are providing the services there, too, there's got to be a wide open field of research questions there. When looking to provide support material, what kinds of session material is most important, or most helpful? We find a lot of times that our short podcasts and short videos on specific assignment components are really helpful for students. So how to generate a hypothesis, how to go through a specific type of reference citation, those types of things. And really short snippet videos are really helpful. And then utilizing student organizations and regular streams of student communication to publicize those are really important and letting faculty know about those resources, too. Right? So going to different faculty to say, you know, what can we do to help your assignments in your class? What resources do you need? Are you finding that your students maybe need some help with a refresher for, you know, APA citations or something like that, and then getting that in, and then having that hows on essential resource, but then send the link to the faculty. Right, then that gets it driving the back. So you're going to increase those, you know, the playthroughs, and the listens and that kind of stuff. And then how for small writing centers looking to expand or attract more students? How do you promote services? Referrals, referrals, referrals, referrals, right, you want to just get in faculty- get in their inboxes, walk by their doors, talk to them, go through syllabi, you know, schedule meetings with faculty to review their syllabi, so that you can, from your expertise as a writing center director, identify points that you can support, right, take that initiative, network, make the communication. And so those were the ones that I could address now, and I see that we're at 12:59. So I will stop. And I will say if anybody has questions, I'm happy to chat.

**[Megan, moderator]** And Rikki, there have been a couple of people who are kind of asking, like, if they could reach out to you post this webinar to get some suggestions and talk about some of the things like rebranding or kind of reframing their narrative for the writing center and that kind of thing.

**[Rikki, presenter]** Yeah, definitely. I'll just put my email in the chat. That's typically the best way to get a hold of me. And it's pretty easy. It's just my first name dot last name at CNSU.edu. And so, that's I'm, like I said, I am really thankful for the opportunity to come and talk with you guys. And I was a little nervous, so I apologize. Because I am not an expert in writing and rhetoric, but that's Dr. Dahlman at our institution, but I am happy to help anybody that I can. So feel free to email me and we'll work.

**[Megan, moderator]** Great, then the last thing that I will say is, hopefully, if you registered and everything you should be receiving an email that has the information with our follow up feedback survey, so if you could, we'd appreciate it if you would fill that out for us. And just be on the lookout for an email in about a week or so where we'll have information about the recording being posted as well as information with the transcripts and the slides from Rikki's presentation today. Thank you all so much for being here.

**[Rikki, presenter]** Yes, thank you so much!