"It's so convenient!' The UW-Madison Writing Center's Chat Conferencing"

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[Intro Music]

Nancy Linh Karls: I’m Nancy Linh Karls from the Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin- Madison, welcoming you to this Writing Center podcast. This podcast series tackles issues of writing in and out of the university.

In this podcast, you’ll hear about our Online Chat Conferencing service which we began offering in 2006. And over the next six minutes, students will tell you about their experiences chatting online with Writing Center instructors. And you’ll learn exactly how to use this convenient service yourself.

[Music]

Donovan Malloy: The way the Writing Center works - it is less about your grammar and more about: is your message clear? And that’s what I always go for is to make sure that when my professor is reading this, that my message is clear and all my objectives are met. So, I think in that respect the Writing Center is very helpful, very, very helpful.

Annette Vee: We’ll hear more from Donovan later, but first I’d like to welcome you to this podcast. In this podcast, you’ll learn about the Online Writing Center’s Chat Conferencing. It’s where you and a tutor can meet in real time online, although you’re not face-to-face. It’s kind of like instant messaging, only a lot more productive.

01:14 You’ll hear from two students who use Chat Conferencing and I’ll explain a bit about how the system works. If you’re interested in conferencing with the Writing Center on short papers from the comfort of your own your room, stay tuned.

[Music]

Annette Vee: I’m Annette Vee, the coordinator of the Online Writing Center and I’m also a Writing Center instructor.

Donovan Malloy: My name is Donovan Malloy, I’m from Los Angeles, California. I’m planning on majoring in Business Management and Human Resources, as well as Communication Arts.
Annette Vee: You’ve been back to our Chat Conferencing several times. What keeps you coming back?

Donovan Malloy: I really like the fact that you get to put your essay into the space and the persons who’s looking at it gets to make marks or say, “OK, this doesn’t make sense, how could you rework that?” And you can actually do that in the chat while you’re talking to them and they can say, “OK, that makes more sense, I understand it now.” It actually gives you a frame of mind of what needs to be changed and an actual place where you could do it right then and there.

02:17 Annette Vee: To get to the Chat Conference, Donovan found the link for online conferencing from our webpage. You can also start at our webpage, www.wisc.edu/writing then click on the link for individual instruction. You’ll see Chat Conferencing as an option on that page and the instructions there will lead you to Learn@UW.

After a one-time registration, you’ll go into a Learn@UW chatroom that, during the hours Chat Conferencing is available, is basically a waiting room for the Writing Center instructor to meet you and other students seeking online appointments. When it’s your turn, the instructor will give you a link to a chatroom where just the two of you can meet to discuss your paper. You paste your paper into the box and then start chatting!

[Music]

03:01 Annette Vee: Like Donovan, most people get the hang of Chat Conferencing pretty quickly. But you maybe wondering, do you have to be really tech savvy to do it?

Rachaya: I’m Rachaya Srisurichan; I’m a first year PhD student from Curriculum Instruction. For me, it’s quite easy to get to chat online and I think everything is so convenient.

[Laughter]

So, it’s not that challenging. And I think it’s very convenient to do it from home. You don’t have to come all the way to the Writing Center. And it’s great!

Annette Vee: Check our website for when Chat Conferencing is available. And keep in mind that like all other Writing Center locations, sometimes we are really busy.

Rachaya: If you have more instructors to ask, that would be great!

[Laughter]

[Music]

Annette Vee: Once you meet with an instructor online, you can expect the same kind of help we’d give in a face-to-face appointment. We’ll ask you what your goals are for your writing and what you’d like feedback on. We have a five-page limit on papers on the Online Writing Center and we can only help currently enrolled University of Wisconsin-Madison
students. But, if you are University of Wisconsin-Madison student, you can bring any short paper there that you would normally bring to the Writing Center in H.C. White. Donovan, what kind of papers do you bring?

04:10 Donovan Malloy: The papers I've brought are mostly my opinionated essays. They're for this certain class that I have right now; we’re talking about understanding institutions of discrimination, institutions of oppression, things like that. Those are mostly the essays I’ve had to do, so they’re about two pages, sometimes a little more.

Annette Vee: You’ve seen a couple of different instructors online, Rachaya, how would you describe the kind of help you get there?

Rachaya: I think they’re both good in different ways. One of them, she helped me with my grammar a lot and gave me like advice how I can use prepositions and problems with run-on sentences, which is quite great for me because English is not my mother tongue and I always have problems with grammar. And the other one, she looked at the writing style and she gave me nice feedback - what should be added to make more sense of the paragraph or something. I prefer to have both at the same time.

05:16 Annette Vee: Is there anything else you’d like to tell our listeners about the Chat Conferencing in the Online Writing Center?

Rachaya: Well it’s great! And it’s nice to save you time. You better try it!

Donovan Malloy: I’ve actually found it very, very useful and I’ll continue to go as long as I have papers to write.

Annette Vee: Thanks so much, Rachaya and Donovan. And for those of you listening, I hope to meet you online soon!

[Ending Music]