

Transforming Writing Support: An Empirical Study of Writing Fellows in Advanced, Discipline-Specific Writing Courses

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Slides available at www.sjsu.edu/wac.

Research Questions

- Are there differences in how junior-level, discipline-specific writing students work with Writing Fellows and Writing Center tutors?
 - Do they tend to work with them at different points in the writing process?
 - Do they work with them on different topics?
- How do student and instructor opinions compare between courses supported by Writing Fellows and those without Fellows?

Overview

The following numbers are from 2016-2017, in which we placed Writing Fellows in 16 sections of junior-level, discipline-specific courses (100W). This table compiles information regarding usage of Writing Center tutors and Writing Fellows.

Number of sections supported by Fellows	16	390	Total student enrollment in sections supported by Fellows
Number of students who used Writing Center tutoring	47	85	Number of students who used Writing Fellows tutoring
Number of Writing Center tutoring sessions	83	133	Number of Writing Fellows tutoring sessions
Average number of Writing Center tutoring sessions per student	1.77	1.56	Average number of Writing Fellows tutoring sessions per student
% of students who used Writing Center tutors	12.05%	21.79%	% of students who used Writing Fellows
Number of students who double dipped	30	35.29%	% of students who double dipped
Total students who used Writing Center and/or Writing Fellows tutoring	102	26.15%	% of total who used Writing Center and/or Writing Fellows tutoring

Research Design

- A quasi-experiment in which we surveyed students from 20 sections of junior-level discipline-specific courses all across the curriculum.

Communication	English	Engineering	Business
Health Science	Sociology	Nursing	Psychology
	Anthropology	Humanities	

- Eight sections supported by Writing Fellows, who worked five hours per week providing embedded supplemental instruction.
- Twelve sections not supported by Writing Fellows, but with access to the Writing Center and other forms of supplemental instruction on campus.
- Usage data was collected from Writing Fellows and Writing Center tutors, as well as opinion data from instructors and students in their classes.

Challenges and Limitations: Reporting and Data Collection

Writing Center

- Data was collected through WCOOnline. Demographic data was reported by students.
- Students input information *before* a tutoring session when they scheduled an appointment (e.g., stage of the writing process).
- Writing Center tutors wrote client reports in the WCOOnline.

Writing Fellows

- Data was collected through Qualtrics. No demographic data was collected.
- Writing Fellows input all the information *after* a tutoring session (e.g., stage of the writing process).
- Writing Fellows wrote client reports when they filled out the Qualtrics survey.

Challenges and Limitations: Courses Serve Disparate Disciplines

100W Course	Majors Served
AMS/HUM/RELS	American Studies, Asian Studies, Comparative Religious Studies, European Studies, Humanities, Liberal Arts, Middle East Studies
COMM	Business, Communication Studies, Speech Education
ENGL	English, English Education, Philosophy
FORL	Chinese, Foreign Language Education, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish
HPRF/HS/NUFS/NURS/OCTH	Health Professions, Health Science, Nursing, Nutrition, Occupational Therapy, Packaging
SOC	African American Studies, Mexican American Studies, Organizational Studies, Sociology, Women's Studies

Challenges and Limitations: Scope of the Study

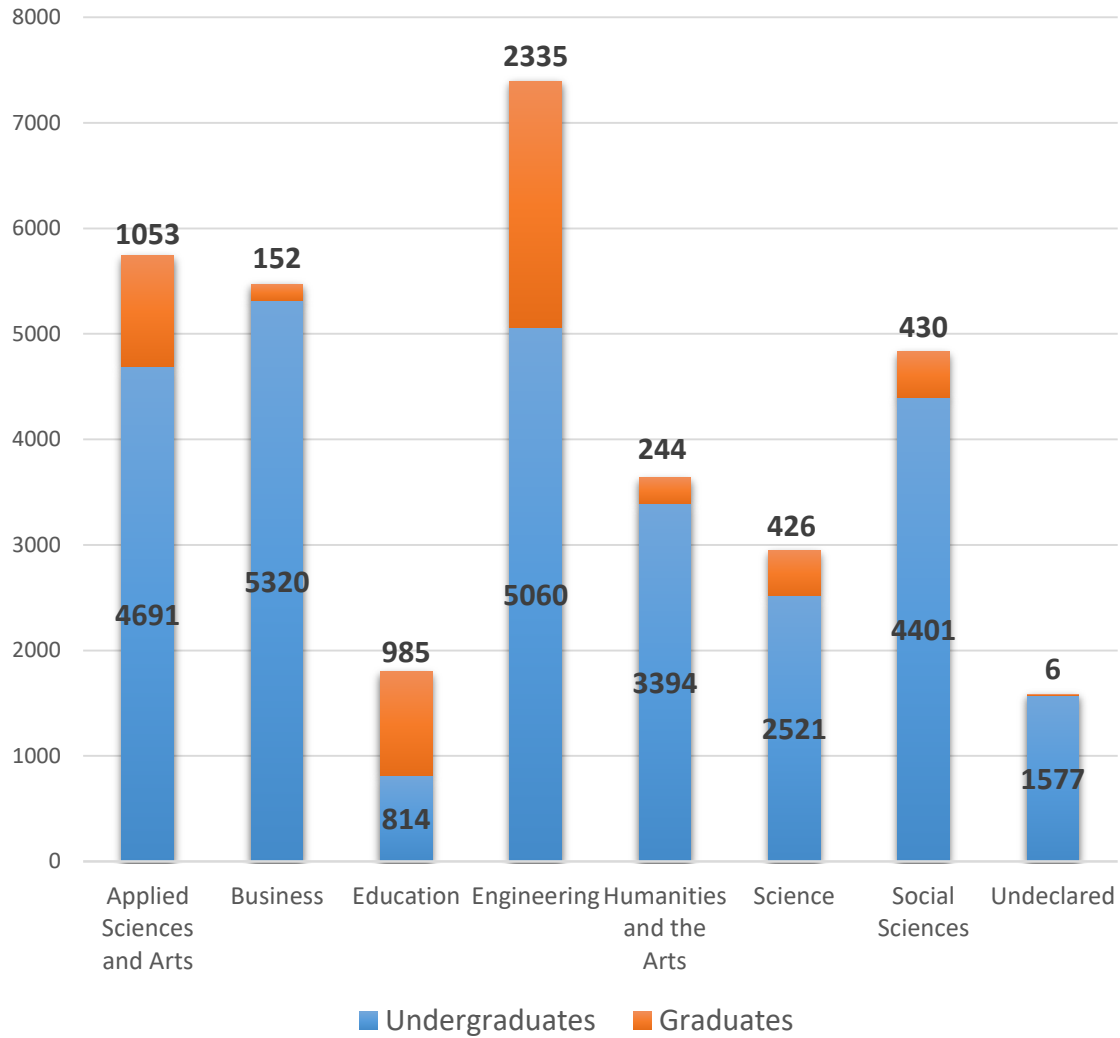
Writing Center

- Data was collected for the entire year (summer 2016 through spring 2017).
- 8,675 students were enrolled in 375 sections of 100W across the university.
- 406 students had 780 sessions, averaging 1.92 sessions per student (4.68% of all 100W students).

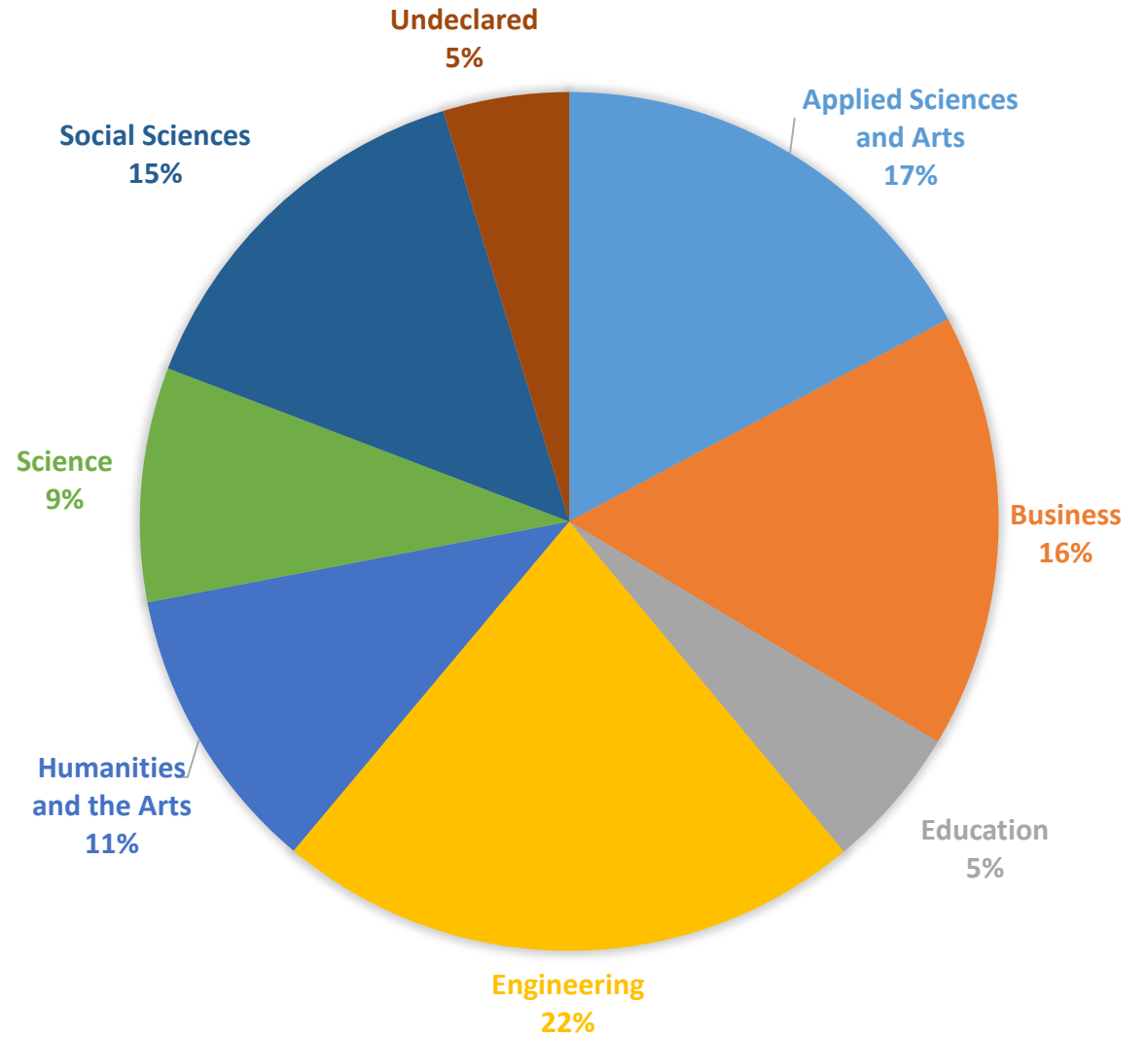
Writing Fellows

- Data was collected for the fall 2016 and spring 2017 semesters only.
- 390 students were enrolled in 16 sections that had embedded Writing Fellows (4.5% of 100W students and 4.3% of sections).
- 85 students had 133 sessions, averaging 1.56 sessions per student (21.79% of 100W students with Fellows).

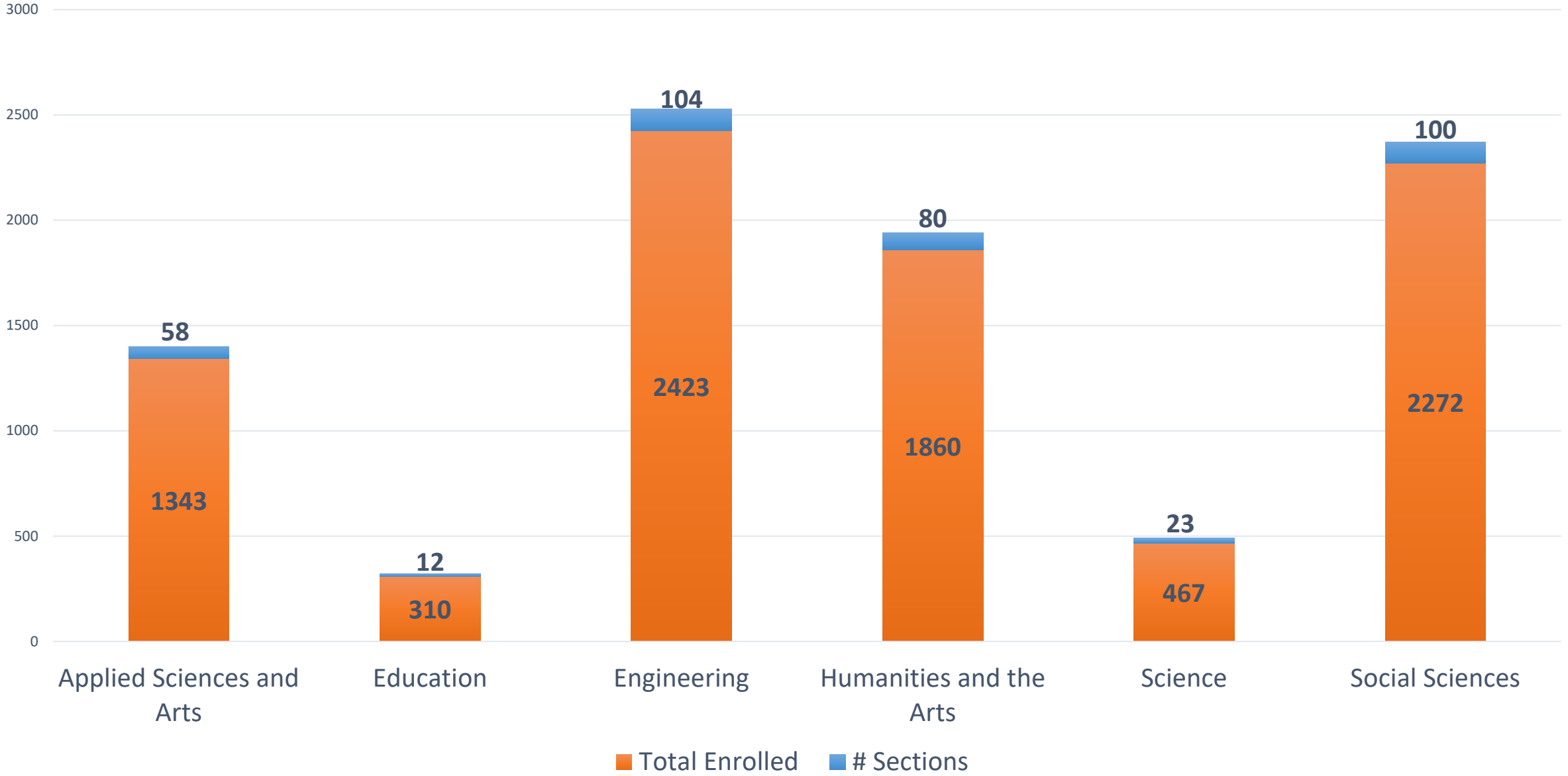
FALL 2016 HEADCOUNT BY COLLEGE AND DEGREE



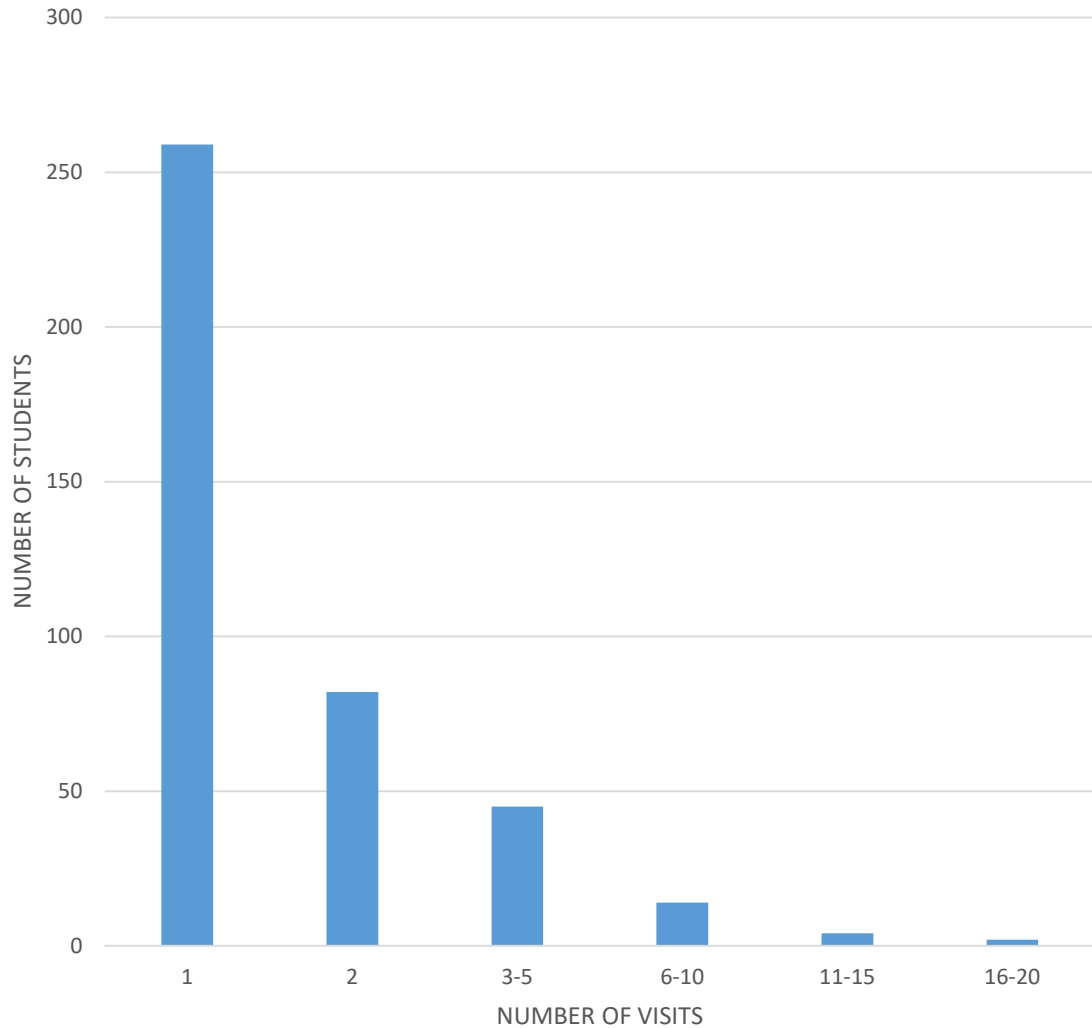
FALL 2016 HEADCOUNT BY COLLEGE



100W SECTIONS AND ENROLLMENT

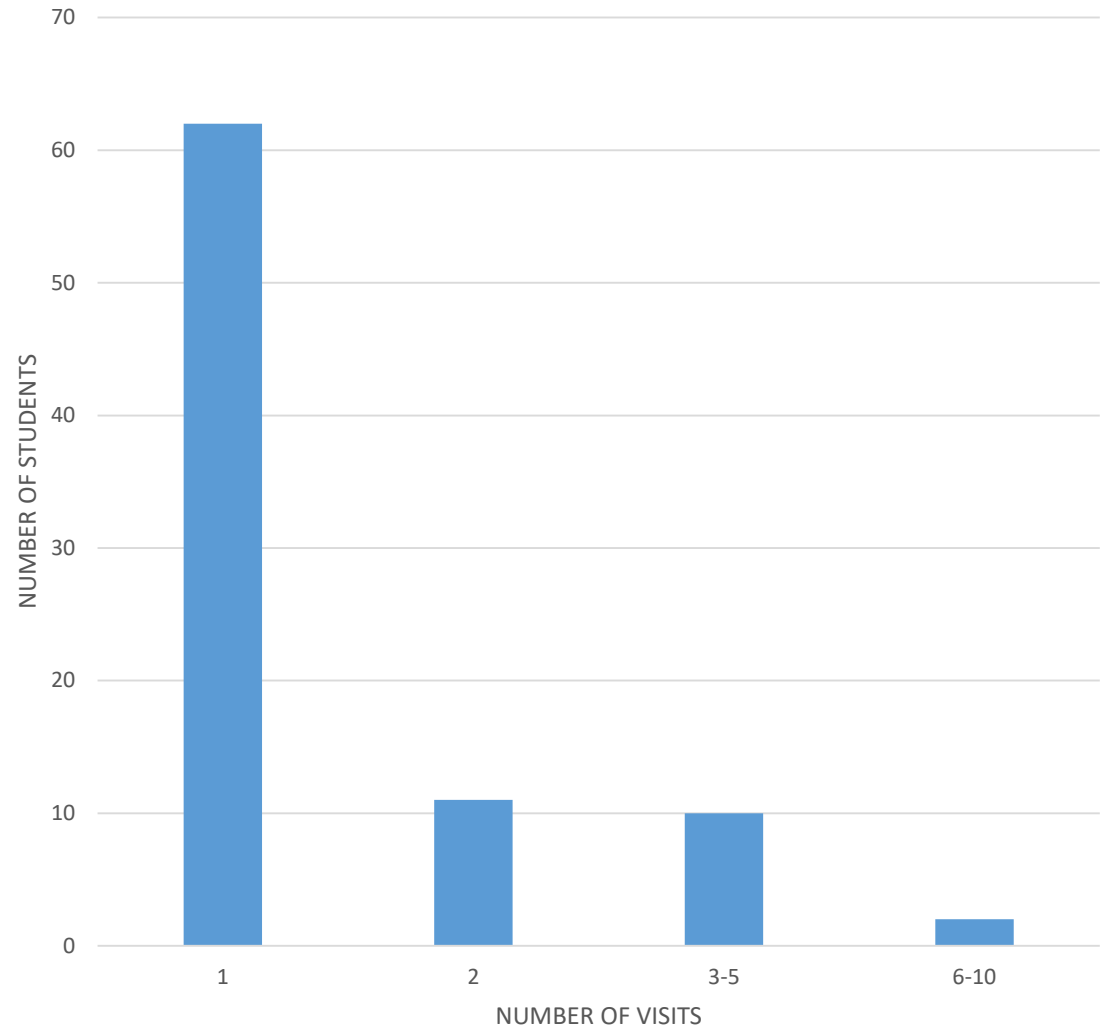


WRITING CENTER VISITS PER STUDENT



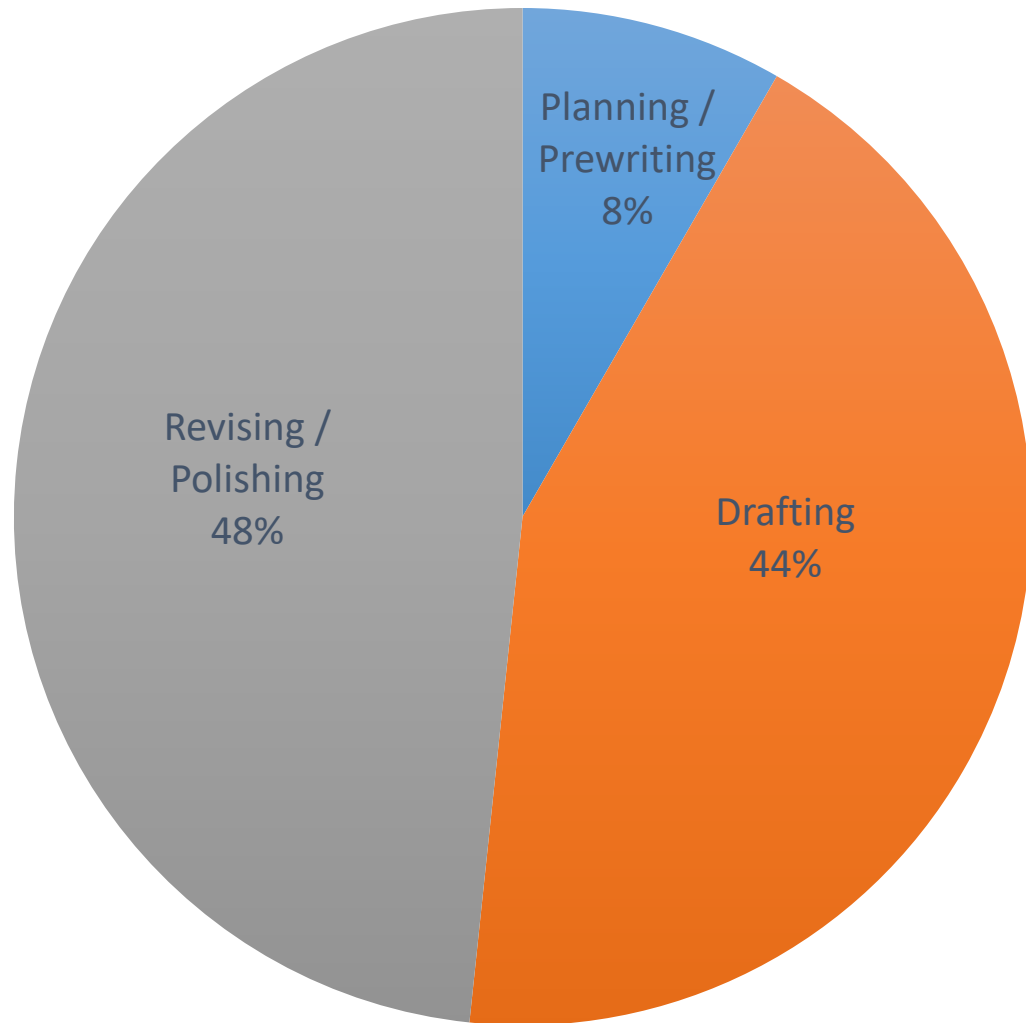
36.21% of students had two or more tutoring sessions with Writing Center tutors.

WRITING FELLOWS VISITS PER STUDENT

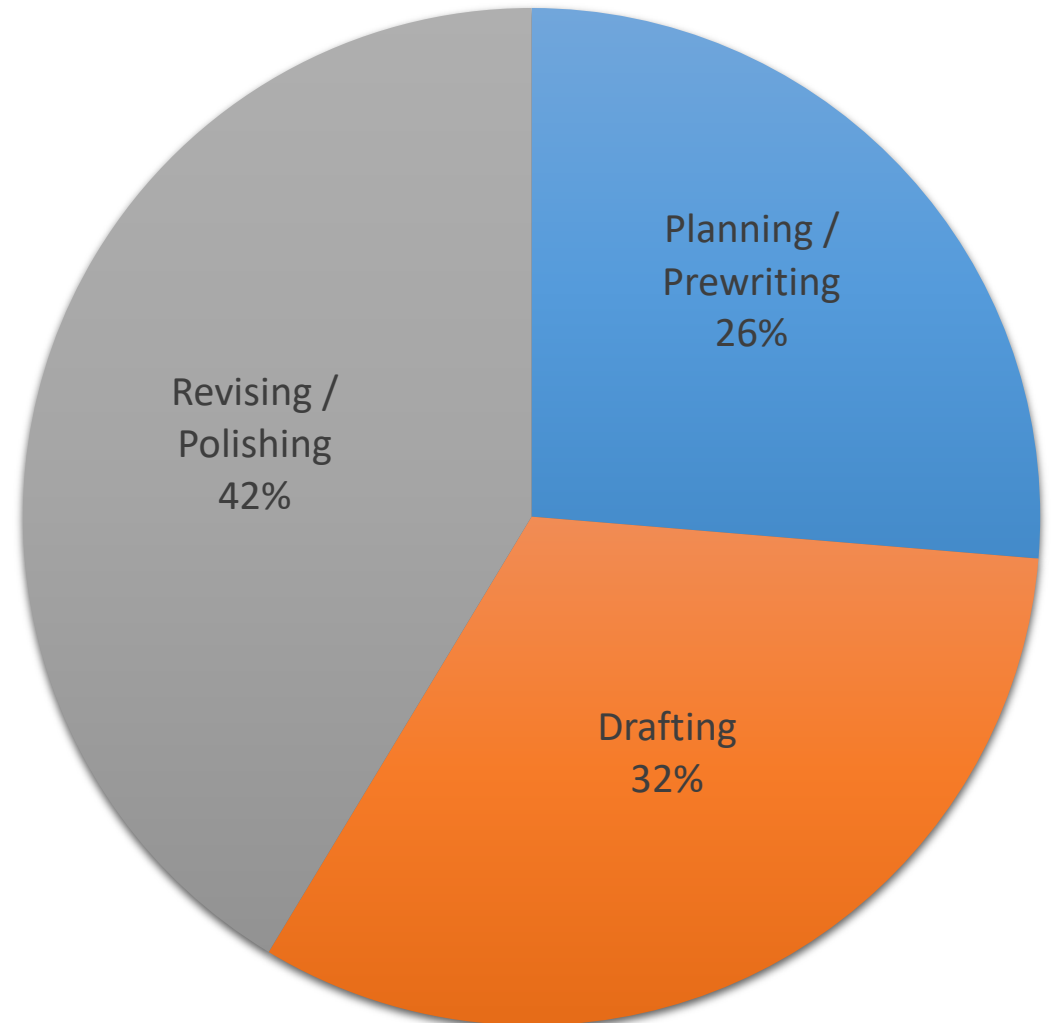


27.06% of students had two or more tutoring sessions with Writing Fellows.

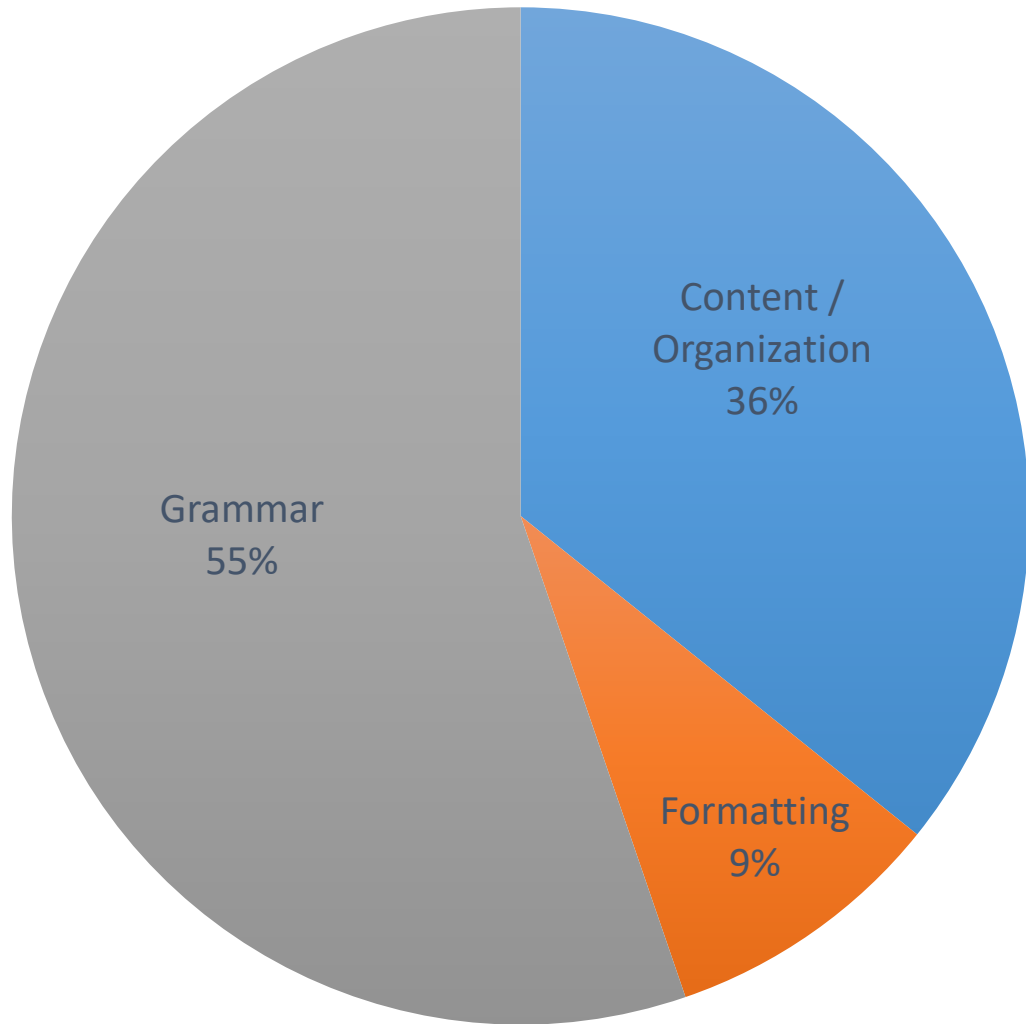
WRITING CENTER TUTORING SESSIONS BY STAGE



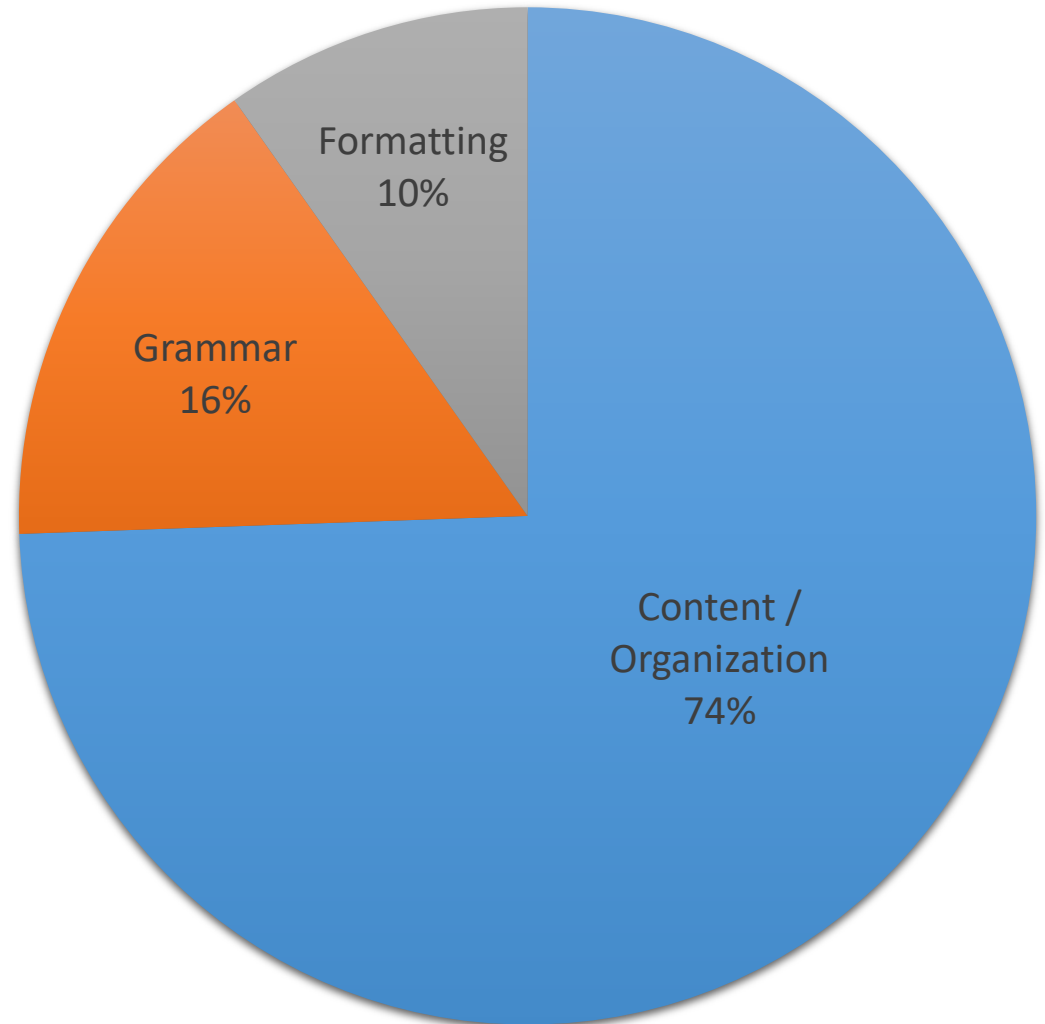
WRITING FELLOWS TUTORING SESSIONS BY STAGE



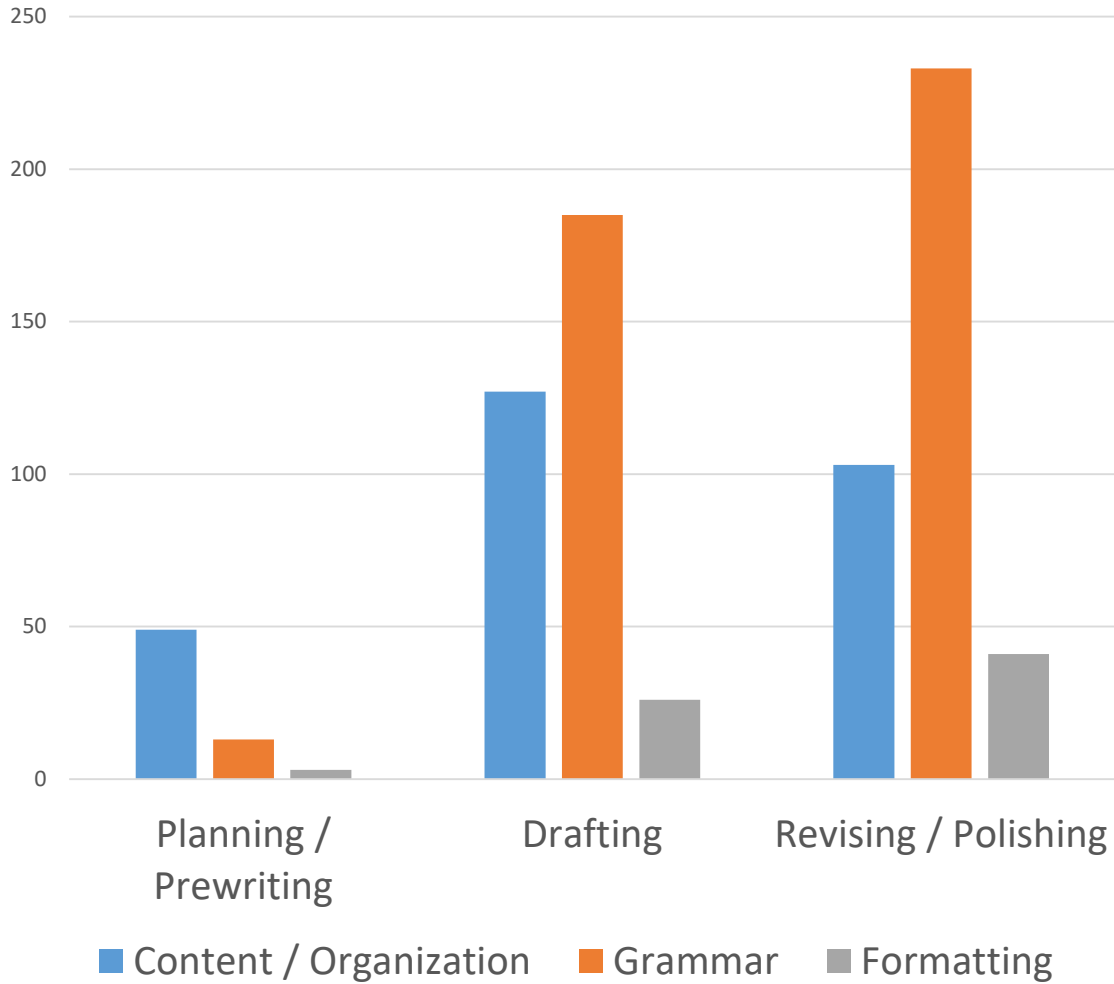
WRITING CENTER TUTORING SESSIONS BY FOCUS



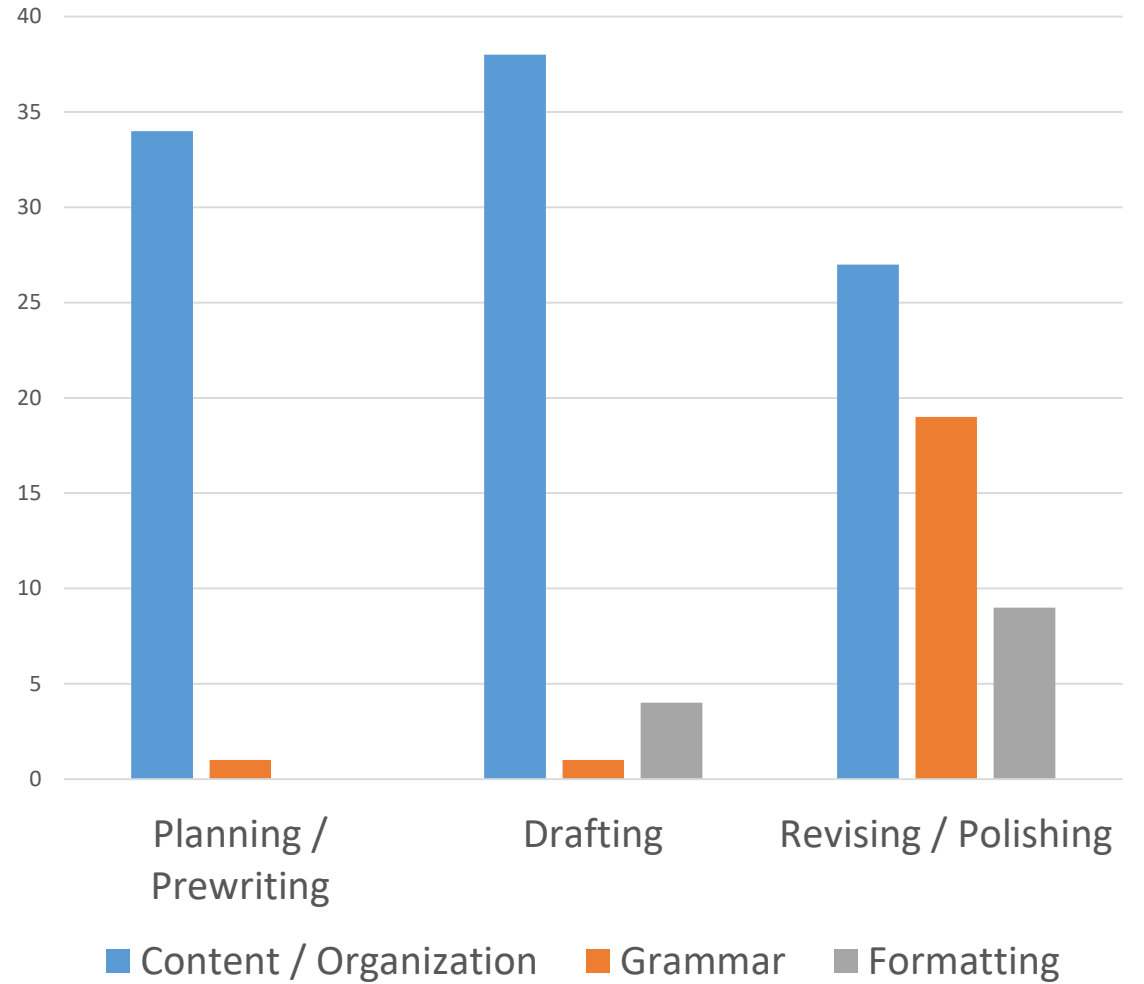
WRITING FELLOWS TUTORING SESSIONS BY FOCUS



**WRITING CENTER TUTORING SESSIONS
BY FOCUS AND STAGE**



**WRITING FELLOWS TUTORING SESSIONS
BY FOCUS AND STAGE**



Types of Assignments

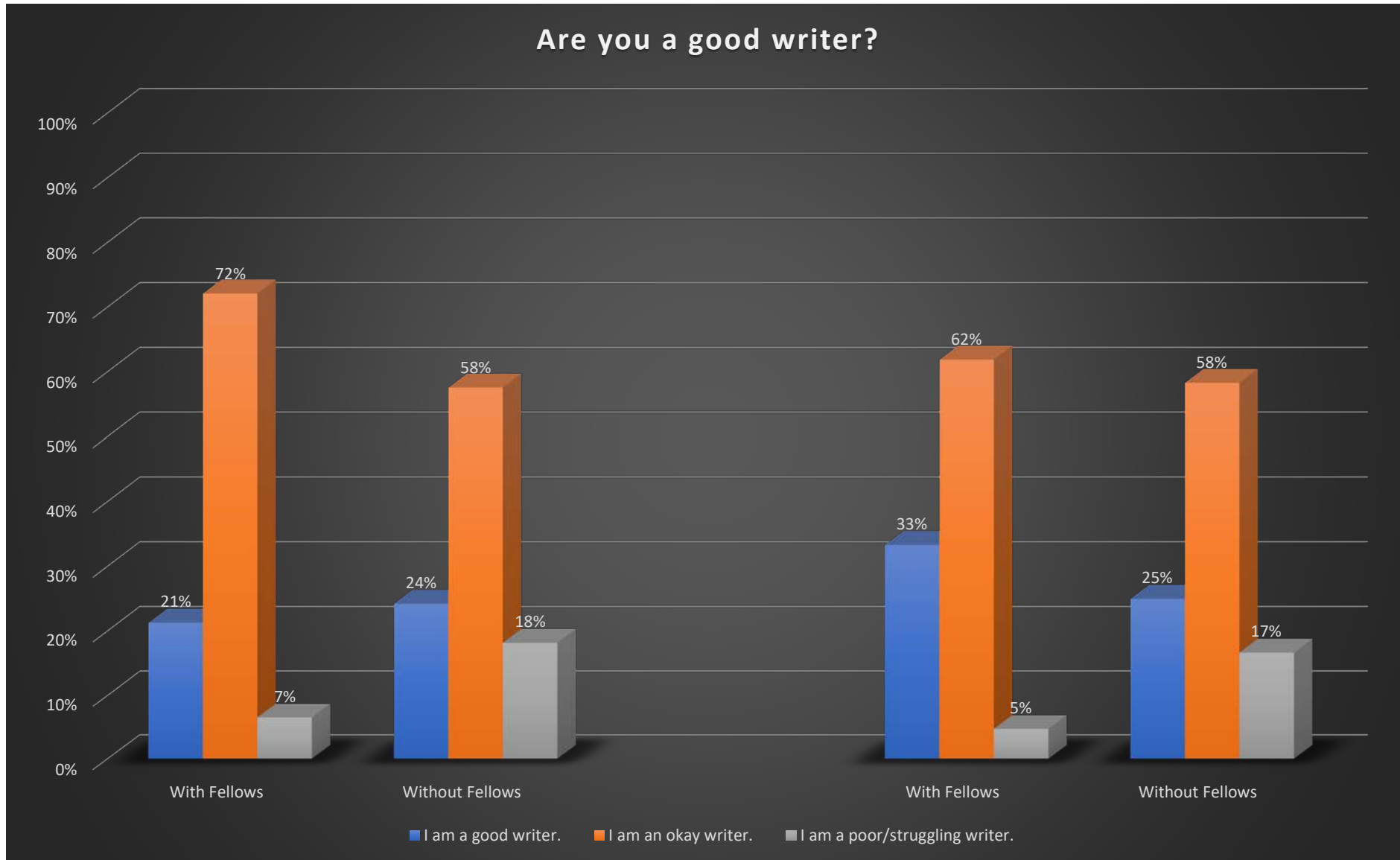
Writing Center

- Bibliography
- Business Memo
- Cover Letter
- Discipline Investigation
- Essay
- Literature Review
- Personal Statement
- Research Paper
- Résumé
- Rhetorical Analysis

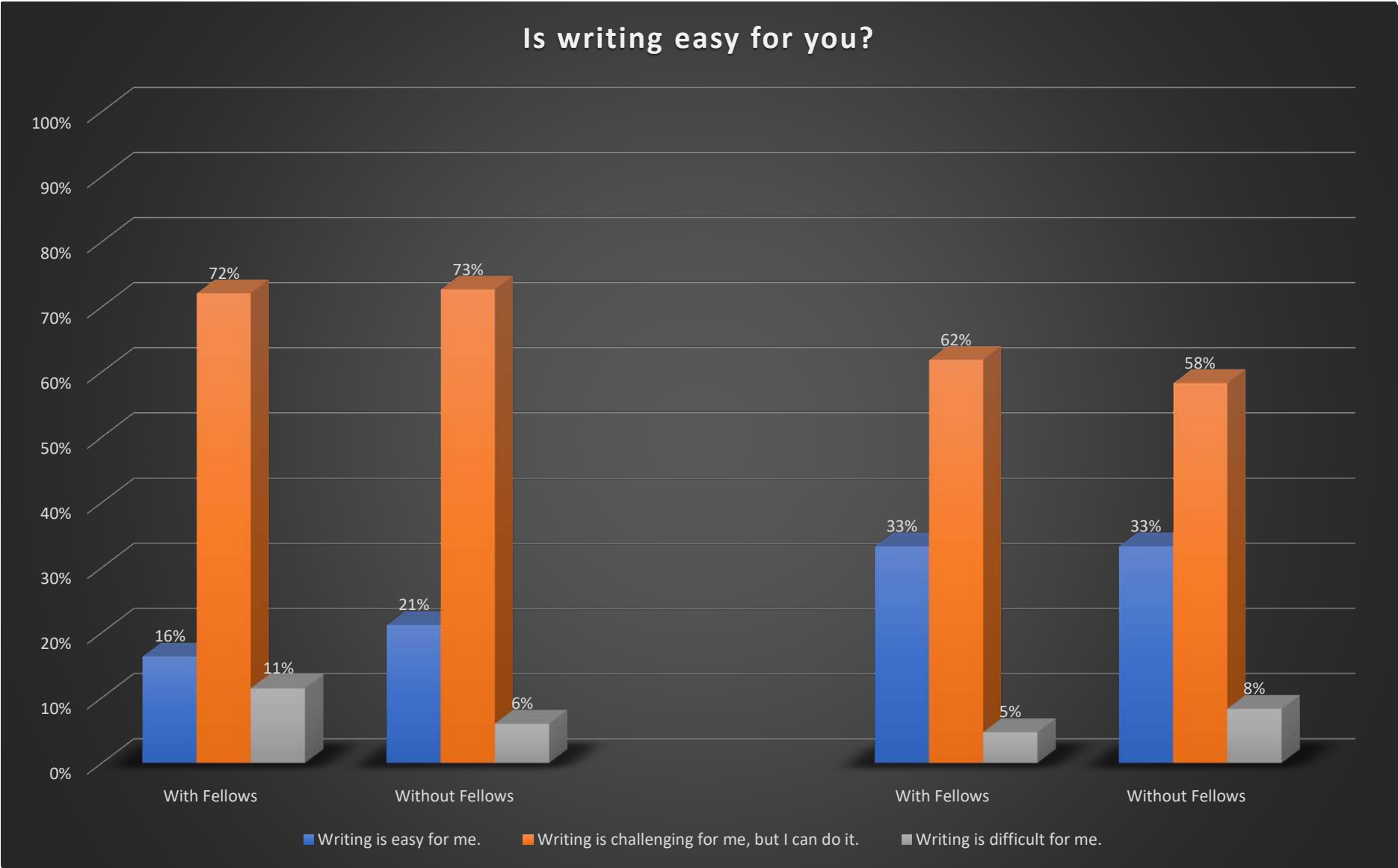
Writing Fellows

- Analytical Essay
- Argumentative Essay
- Article Analysis
- Biography
- Business Memo
- Business Proposal
- Compare/Contrast Essay
- Literature Review
- Personal Response
- Research Paper

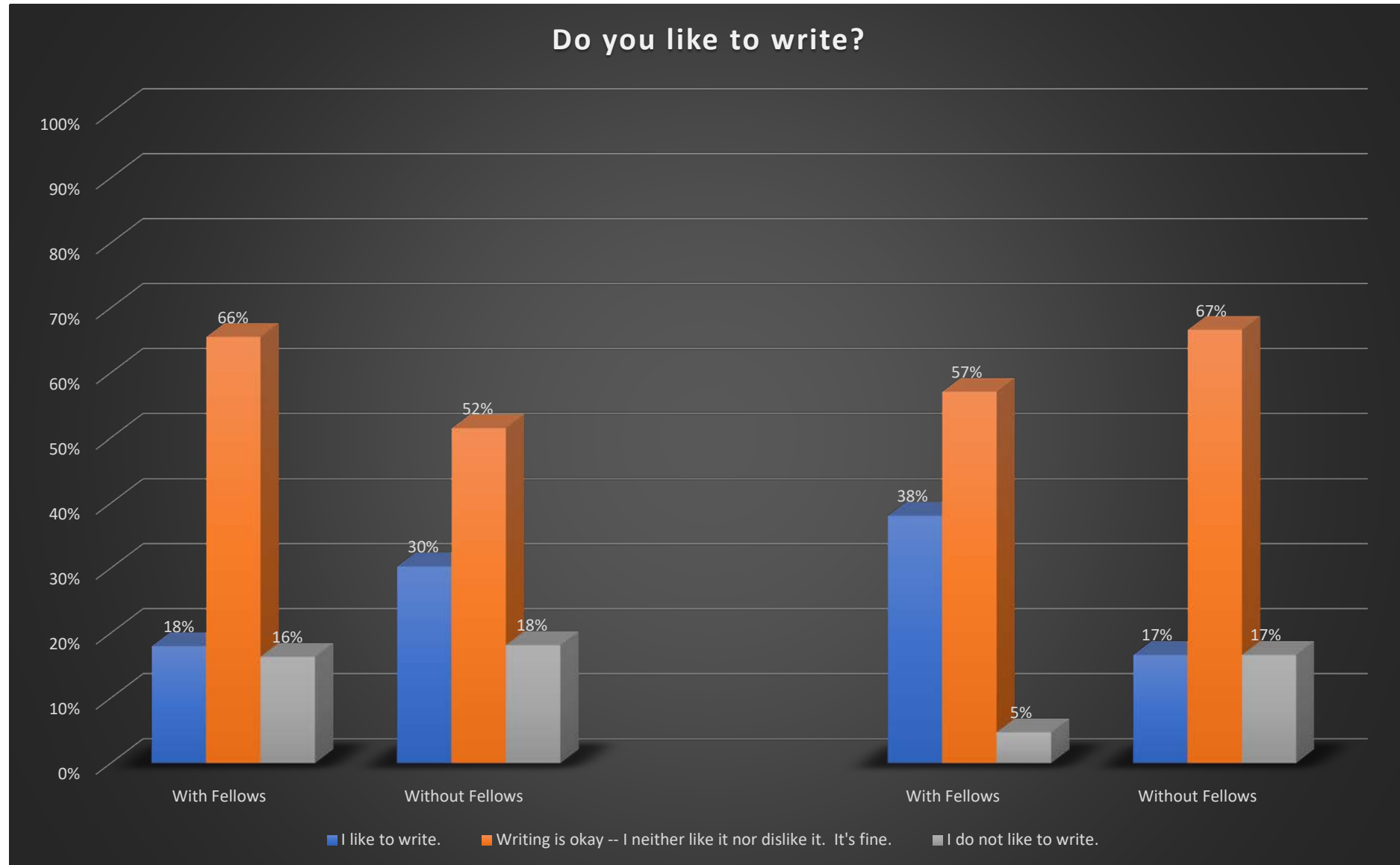
Student Opinions



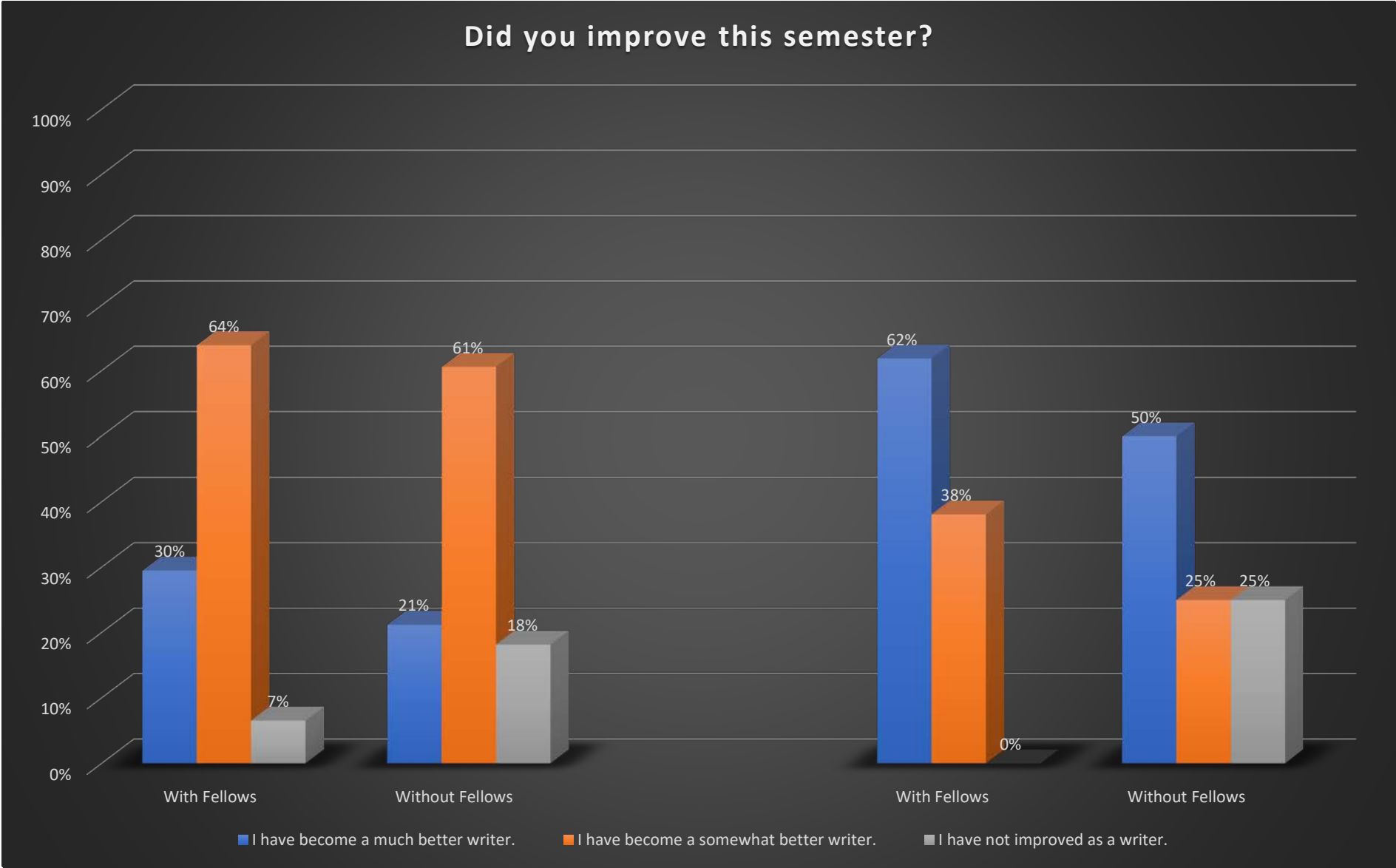
Student Opinions



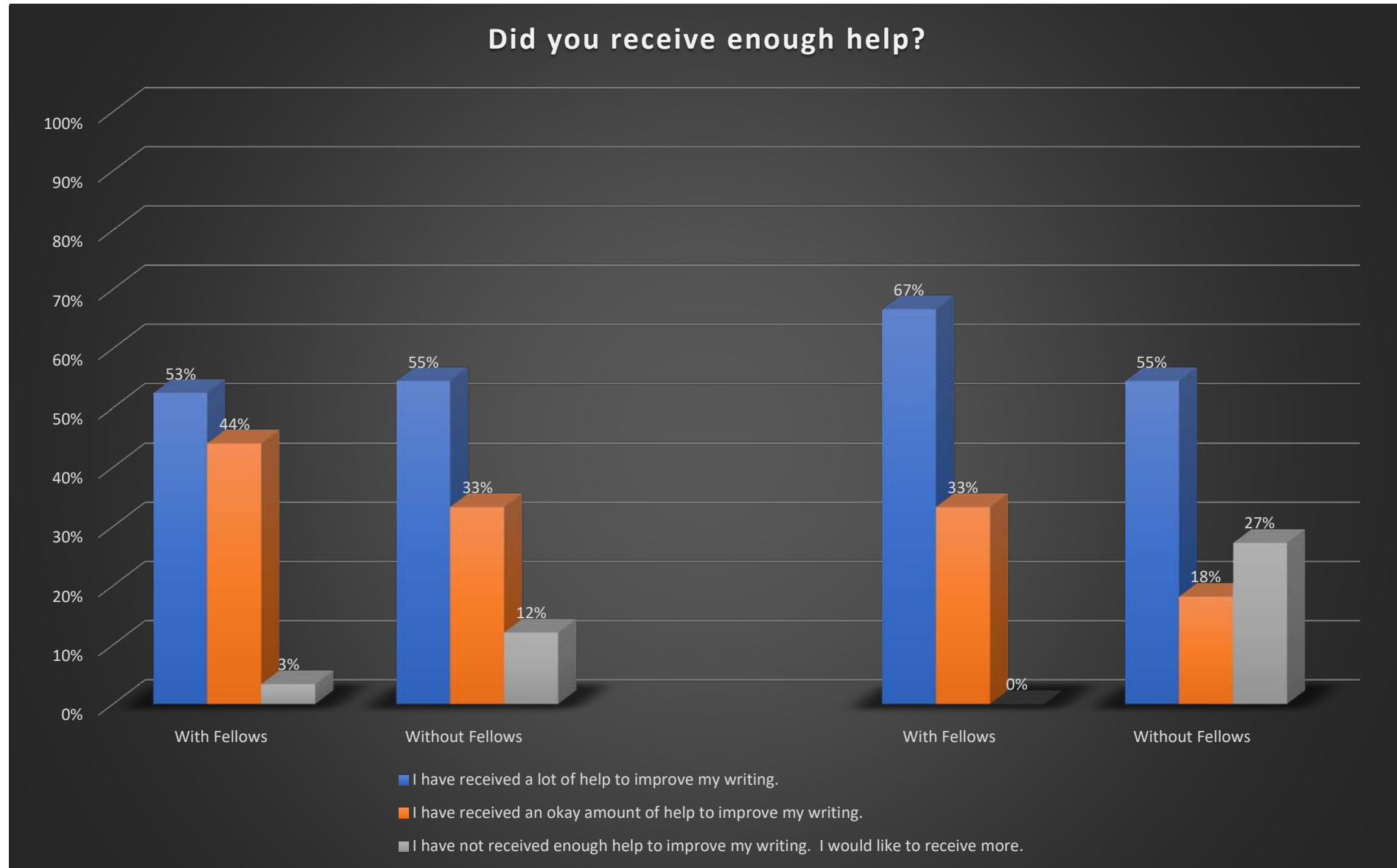
Student Opinions



Student Opinions

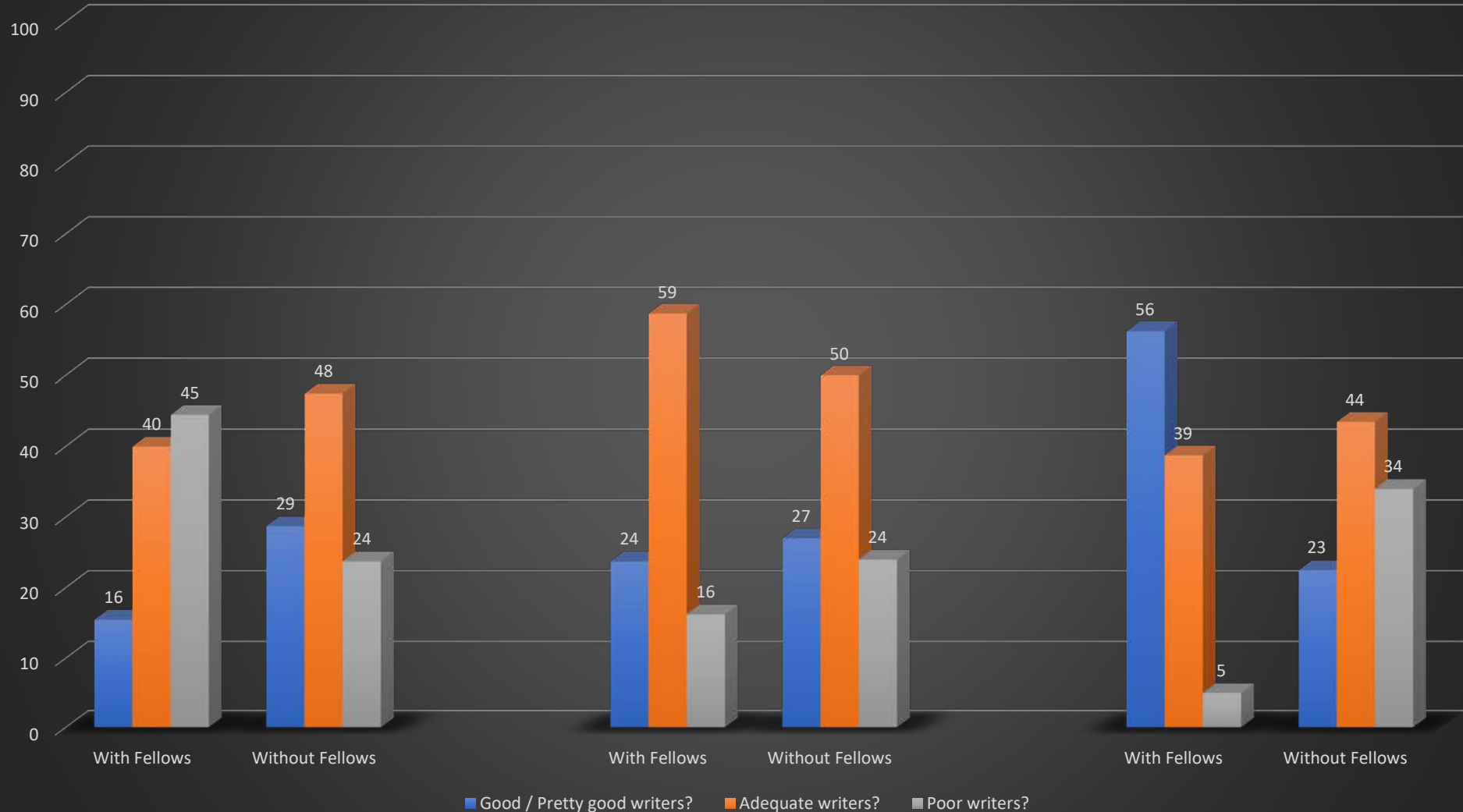


Student Opinions

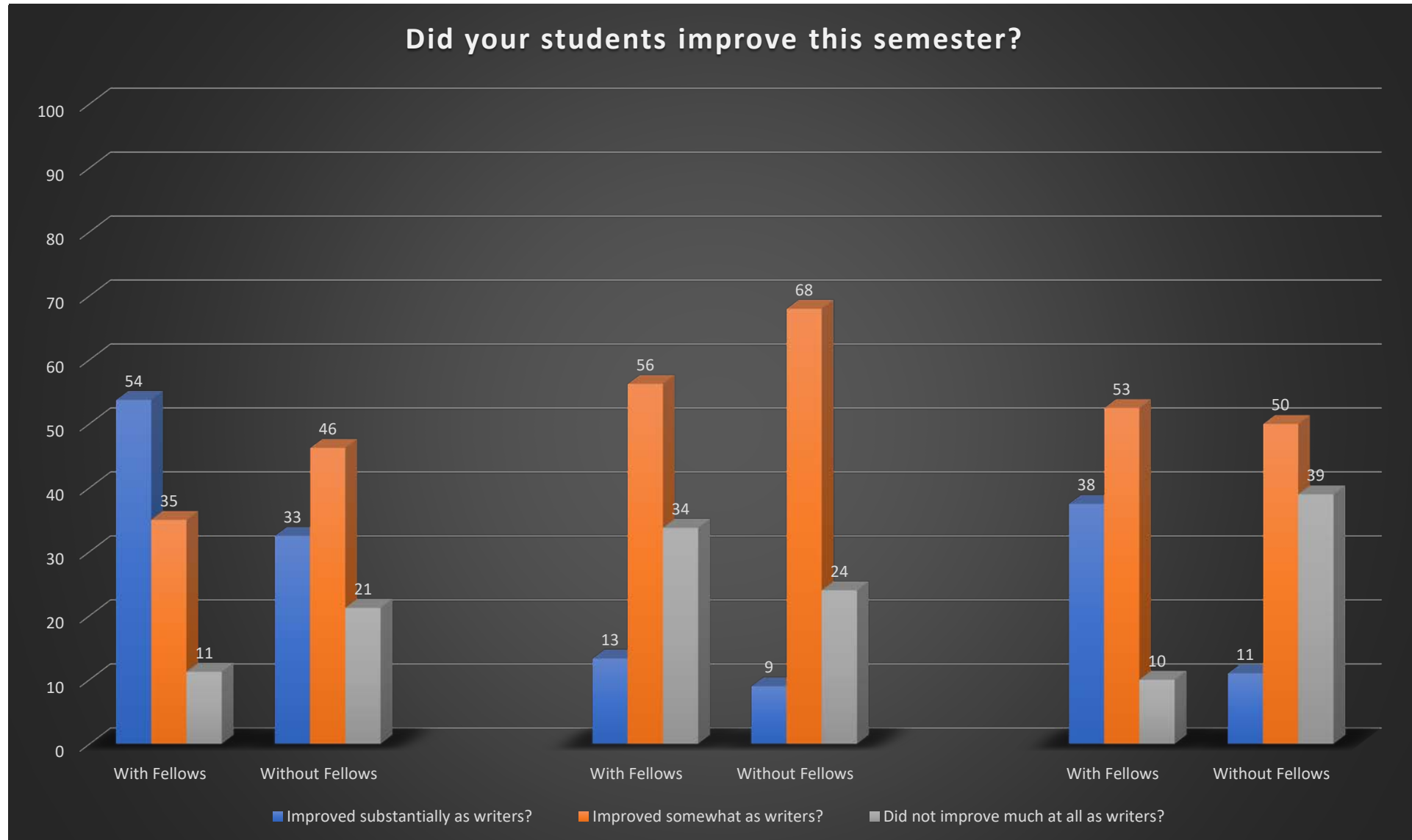


Instructor Opinions

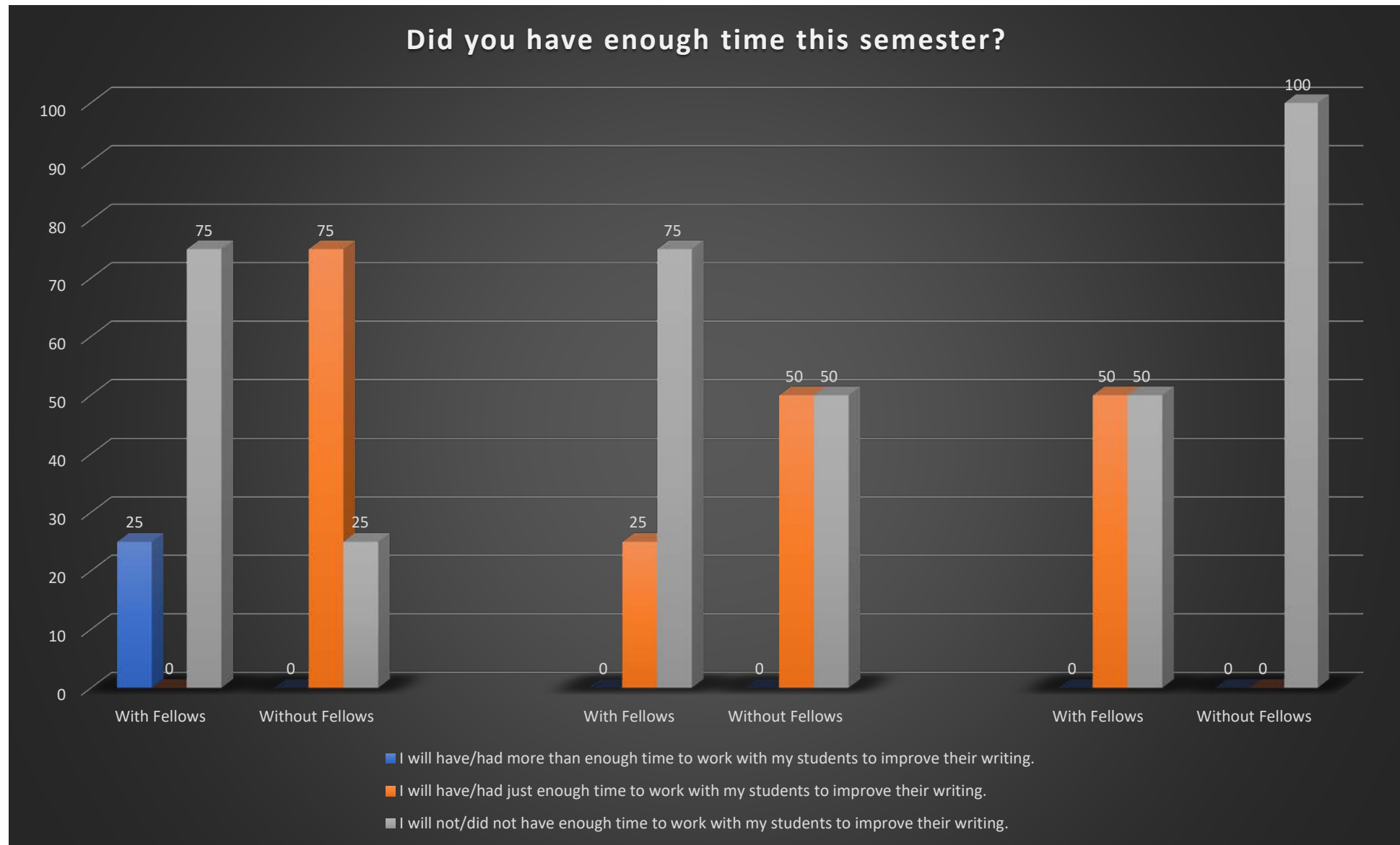
Are your students good writers?



Instructor Opinions



Instructor Opinions



Conclusions:

The Added Value of Writing Fellows

- Students tend to work with Fellows earlier in the writing process, and they tend to focus more on higher-order concerns.
- Students in courses supported by Fellows seek additional tutoring services from the Writing Center at a higher rate.
- Students in sections with Fellows have better attitudes about themselves as writers and believe they have improved more as writers.
- Faculty tend to see their students in similar ways, but faculty in sections with Fellows think their students improved significantly more.

Next Steps

- Streamline processes. In fall 2017, Writing Fellows became part of the Writing Center. Both now use the WCOOnline system and have uniform training.
- Continue to clarify the differences between student-derived data vs. Writing Fellow/Writing Tutor-derived data.
- Compare data from 100W courses with Fellows to data from FYW courses with Fellows (which we collected last year).
- Continue to study usage of Writing Fellows and Writing Center tutors in 100W junior-level writing courses.
- Expand course-embedded tutoring to other writing-intensive courses.

Thank you!