Hello everyone. My name is Lexi Stewart, and I’m a student peer tutor researcher at York College of Pennsylvania. This is the recorded version of my presentation "Investigating Multimodal Feedback Methods in Asynchronous Tutoring at the Writing Center."

To give a bit of an overview, I’ll start by explaining what Drop-Off Essay Review is in our writing center. I’ll review some research I’ve used for my project, then get into the project itself by explaining my methods, results, and some preliminary findings.

So, what is Drop-Off Essay Review? This is our asynchronous tutoring method in the writing center at York College of Pennsylvania. Students can sign their paper and assignment instructions or rubric up by the time on their slot, which will either be 10am, 11am, or 12pm, and then they will receive feedback from a writing tutor that same day by 9pm. Drop-Off uses three different types of feedback. First, tutors fill out a rubric that they insert at the top of the student’s paper. This rubric will go over the assignment requirements to let a student know what they fulfilled or what they still need to complete, as well as comment on something the student did well on in their paper and explain a few things the student could consider to improve their paper. Tutors will also leave marginal comments directly on the paper itself with suggestions for improvement. And finally, tutors create a short screen-recorded video with additional feedback or explaining some of their written feedback in the rubric or comments.

So, the main points I’ve pulled from the literature I’ve reviewed is that structure is key when it comes to creating an asynchronous writing tutoring method. I also have some sources looking into different feedback types, such as comparing written versus video feedback, but these sources don’t consider these types used together or are done in a classroom setting instead of writing tutoring. Finally, research discusses the changes between asynchronous and in-person tutoring, and the different advantages each type has such as being helpful for busy schedules with asynchronous tutoring but being more personal with in-person tutoring.

I created a survey to investigate student experiences with Drop-Off and its various feedback types. This survey was sent out to students who had a Drop-Off appointment during the Spring 2023 semester at York College of Pennsylvania before March 1st, which was the day the survey was sent, and was ended after March 17th. This survey consisted of a combination of open and closed questions, and was separated into three sections. The first section was a single question to cover informed consent, the second section covered background information about the students, and the third section asked questions about the students’ experiences with a specific Drop-Off appointment from this semester. By the time the survey closed, I received 13 responses from a pool of 50 possible participants. For those of you who are interested, a copy of the survey questions is included as a handout for this presentation.

Before I go into my results, I wanted to share that I’m still currently in the analysis process and I’m only sharing preliminary findings in this presentation. From my background results, 67 percent of students who responded to my survey were freshmen and 77 percent were on-campus residents. Most students indicated prior tutoring experience, with 62 percent having a Drop-Off appointment prior to this semester and 62 percent had experienced in-person or Zoom tutoring. Over half of the students responded that they had used Drop-Off to fulfill a class requirement to come to the Writing Center, with the specific amount being 54 percent of participants.

From students’ experience with Drop-Off, students often explained they made Drop-Off appointments instead of Zoom or in-person because of time or convenience. Six students mentioned time and eight students mentioned convenience, with some of these students mentioning both time and convenience in their answers. Students also tended to comment appreciation for feedback on grammar and structure when answering what they found helpful about their tutor’s feedback. To be specific, five students brought up grammar or structure when discussing their tutor’s feedback.

Looking at the results for questions about the feedback types, six out of the thirteen participants indicated that they reviewed all three types of feedback. Of those 6, one out of six preferred the video feedback, two out of six preferred both the video and marginal comments, two out of six preferred the marginal comments, and one out of six indicated no preference between the feedback types. Two students also mentioned in their answers that they did not receive marginal comments with their feedback, but using background tools in the Writing Center I was able to look into these appointments and see that these students had been provided marginal comments by their tutors.

To share some quick findings based on these results, immediately the fact that some students weren’t noticing their marginal comments shows that we should be adding instructions to Drop-Off for how to display the marginal comments in Word. The appointment confirmation does include a video for students to watch to see how to do so, but since students don’t always look at the appointment confirmation, it would likely be best to add these instructions within the rubric feedback itself to guarantee that students see it. Feedback also shows that our students value the combination of marginal comments with the video feedback, and this is likely because tutors often use the video feedback to explain more of their marginal comments. I am theorizing that students find this combination so helpful because the video provides a space to give a little bit of what is lost from in-person tutoring, where tutors are able to speak directly to their students to explain their feedback. Of course, this is not exactly the same as sitting down with a tutor, but the video does allow tutors to speak to their students even when they are not physically meeting them.

Here are the first few sources I used for my project.

And here are the rest of my sources. Thank you everyone for watching my presentation!