Palomar College English Department

Writing Center

Tutor Handbook

2019–2020 Academic Year

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Note: The material in Sections H though S is taken from the books *What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know* and *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. These are both excellent guides to tutoring. If you'd like to read them, we have copies available in both the Escondido and San Marcos locations.

A. General Introduction

We're excited to have you as part of the Palomar College Writing Center team! This booklet contains an overview of some of our policies and procedures, information about the English composition classes offered at Palomar, and some strategies to make your tutoring sessions more effective.

At the Writing Center on the San Marcos campus, tutoring sessions are 25 minutes long, and students may sign up in advance for one session per day. After that first session additional time to meet with a tutor again is based on availability. Walk-in appointments are also based on tutor availability. (More information about the scheduling process is available in Section D of this Tutor Handbook.)

At the other site locations, tutoring sessions are available on a walk-in basis. Please check with your Tutor Coordinator at that location for details on the walk-in process.

B. Policies and Procedures

a. Reporting Absences

For those of you working on the main campus, when you must report an absence or if you are going to be late, please call the Writing Center at 760-744-1150, ext. 2778. For those working at the Escondido Center, the Fallbrook Education Center, the Rancho Bernardo Education Center, and/or Camp Pendleton, please call the Tutor Coordinator at your location to report an absence.

In all cases – whether you're working on the main campus or at a Center location – please also send a follow-up email to Jeannette.

b. Break Schedule

The Writing Center follows the break policy of California's labor laws:

Hours worked:	Unpaid lunch breaks:
9 or more	1 hour
6.5-8.5	30 minutes
6	Optional 30 minutes
5.5 or less	No lunch break

* Tutors receive a 15-minute paid break for every four hours of work.

c. 2019-2020 Academic Year Work and Holiday Schedule

Tutoring begins the second week of each semester and ends on the last Thursday of the semester.

During summer session, tutoring begins on the third day of summer school.

- **For Fall 2019:**
    - Start and end dates: Tutoring begins Week 2 of the semester, and so will start on Monday, August 26, this year. The last day of tutoring for the fall semester will be Thursday, December 12.
    - Holiday schedule: The Writing Center will be closed on Monday, 9/2 (Labor Day); Friday, 9/27 (Native American Day); Monday, 11/11 (Veterans' Day); and the week of November 25-29 (Thanksgiving break).
    - Winter break is six weeks long, from December 16 through January 24.

- **For Spring 2020:**
    - Start and end dates: Tutoring begins Week 2 of the semester, and so will start on Monday, February 3, this year. The last day of tutoring for the spring semester will be Thursday, May 21.
    - Holiday schedule: The Writing Center will be closed on Friday, 2/14 (Lincoln's Day); Monday, 2/17 (Washington's Day); and the week of March 23–27 (spring break).

d. CRLA Certification

Palomar would like all of our tutors to be certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) since it's an important part of our accreditation process, so we hope you can attend one of the upcoming workshops. You just need to attend ONE session of trainings in order to receive your Level 1 certification, and they will be offered on the following days and times this year at the Math Center (room MC-1) on the main campus in San Marcos:

- Session 1: Wednesday, August 14, from 8:30-4:00
- Session 2: Friday, October 11, AND Friday, October 18, from 2:00-5:30 each of those two Fridays
- Session 3: Friday, January 24, from 8:30-4:00
- Session 4: Friday, April 3, AND Friday, April 10, from 2:00-5:30 each of those two Fridays

There is no cost to sign up for the training, and you'll be paid for six hours total.

C. Palomar's Policies Regarding Short-Term Employees

All of our tutors are hired as short-term employees. Here are Palomar's policies regarding short-term employees:

> A short-term employee is hired to perform a service that is not needed on a continuing basis and is **limited** to 160 days per fiscal year. The department budget may further limit these days, but in no case will a short-term employee work more than 160 days in a fiscal year.

> A short-term employee can work 8 hours per day, 40 hours per week. If a short-term employee works 1 hour per day, it counts as 1 day towards the 160-day limit per fiscal year. Short-term employees are not exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and shall be paid overtime for hours worked over 8 hours per day.

> Short-term employees are hired at one set rate for a specific assignment and are not eligible for future pay increases in that assignment.

Since we do not offer tutoring during Palomar's breaks, our tutors do not have to worry about bumping up against the 160-day limit.

D. Tutor Classification Levels

The following two tables contain information about our current Tutor Classification Levels, as of May 21, 2019. The first table contains the minimum qualifications required for each level, and the second table contains a job description/definition for each level.

Qualifications (A maximum of two years at each level)	
Peer Tutor **$12/hr**	Completion of English 100 and English 202 or 203 or equivalent. AND Must have received at least a grade of "B" in all English courses. AND Letter of recommendation from a Palomar College faculty member in the English Department. AND Currently enrolled in lower- or upper-division college classes.

Intern I **$14/hr**	Completion of English 100 and English 202 or 203 or equivalent. AND At least two years of experience in tutoring. AND Must have received at least a grade of "B" in all English courses. AND Letter of recommendation from a faculty member in an English Department.
Intern II **$16/hr**	Bachelor's degree in English or a related field (literature, rhetoric and writing, composition studies, etc.). AND At least two years of experience in tutoring and/or teaching. AND Must have received at least a grade of "B" in all English courses. OR Enrollment in Master's degree program in English or a related field (literature, rhetoric and writing, composition studies, etc.). AND At least two years of experience in tutoring and/or teaching. AND Must have received at least a grade of "B" in all English courses.
Intern III **$18/hr**	Bachelor's degree in English or a related field (literature, rhetoric and writing, composition studies, etc.). AND At least four years of experience in tutoring and/or teaching. AND Must have received at least a grade of "B" in all English courses.

	OR
	Master's degree in English or a related field (literature, rhetoric and writing, composition studies, etc.).
	AND
	At least four years of experience in tutoring and/or teaching.
	AND
	Must have received at least a grade of "B" in all English courses at the undergraduate and graduate level.
Intern IV **$20/hr**	Master's degree or Ph.D. in English or a related field (literature, rhetoric and writing, composition studies, etc.). AND At least six years of experience in tutoring and/or teaching. AND Must have received at least a grade of "B" in all English courses at the undergraduate and graduate level.

Definition	
Peer Tutor	The primary function and role of a Peer Tutor is to provide students with academic support relative to their assignments for a course. These individuals will possess knowledge in the content areas and will work with students on writing and grammar concepts. They should be comfortable working with students from diverse backgrounds and who have a range of abilities, and will be expected to complete training on best practices for working as a Peer Tutor. Peer Tutors may be hired as Embedded Tutors upon request of the instructor of an English class and based on the tutor's superior performance in 200-level English classes and the instructor's assessment of their knowledge and skills. As Embedded Tutors, they will communicate promptly and dependably with the instructor, attend class sessions, assist in facilitating individual or small-group work during class (as directed by the instructor), and be available for one additional paid hour per week to meet with students from the course individually or in small groups.

Intern I	The primary function and role of an Intern I is to provide Palomar College students with academic support relative to their assignments for a course and to provide students with intermediate study skills and techniques. The Intern I will work in the English Department Writing Center or at one of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) locations, or they may also work as an Embedded Tutor in a classroom environment. They should be comfortable working with students from diverse backgrounds and who have a range of abilities. Tutors at the Intern I level will possess a strong knowledge of the writing process, of MLA format, and of the conventions and standards of college-level academic writing and editing. They will provide one-to-one tutoring and support for Palomar College students and assist those students with writing assignments for any Palomar College class. Intern I tutors will also participate in staff professional development opportunities, including trainings, meetings, workshops, and collaborations with English faculty or with faculty in other disciplines (for instance, learning information related to APA or Chicago documentation style). The Intern I tutor will also communicate with the Writing Center Director and Tutor Coordinator as needed. As mentioned, tutors at the Intern I level may be hired as Embedded Tutors upon request of the instructor of an English class and based on the tutor's superior performance in 200-level English classes and the instructor's assessment of the tutor's knowledge and skills. As Embedded Tutors, they will communicate promptly and dependably with the instructor, attend class sessions, assist in facilitating individual or small-group work during class (as directed by the instructor), and be available for one additional paid hour per week to meet with students from the course individually or in small groups.
Intern II	As with tutors at the Intern I level, the primary function and role of an Intern II is to provide Palomar College students with academic support relative to their assignments for a course and to provide students with intermediate study skills and techniques. The Intern II will work in the English Department Writing Center or at one of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) locations. They should be comfortable working with students from diverse backgrounds and who have a range of abilities, and should have some knowledge of working with students with disabilities.

	Tutors at the Intern II level will possess a high level of knowledge of the writing process, of MLA format, and of the conventions and standards of college-level academic writing and editing. They will provide one-on-one tutoring and support for Palomar College students and assist those students with writing assignments for any Palomar College class. They may also lead study or discussion sessions and/or assist with developing workshops for Palomar College students. The Intern II will visit classes by instructor request to provide information about the writing support services offered at the Writing Center or at that campus' Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), and will also communicate with the Writing Center Director and Tutor Coordinator as needed.
	Tutors at the Intern II level may also be hired as Embedded Tutors upon request of the instructor of an English class and based on the tutor's superior performance in 200-level English classes and the instructor's assessment of their knowledge and skills. As Embedded Tutors, they will communicate promptly and dependably with the instructor, attend class sessions, assist in facilitating individual or small-group work during class (as directed by the instructor), and be available for one additional paid hour per week to meet with students from the course individually or in small groups.
	Intern II tutors will also participate independently and/or collaboratively in regular staff professional development opportunities, including trainings, meetings, workshops, and collaborations with English faculty and/or faculty in other disciplines (for instance, learning information related to APA or Chicago documentation style). It is also expected that Intern II tutors will check in on a regular basis on the Writing Center's Canvas space and participate in ongoing professional development, evaluation, and assessment.
	The Intern II should possess a solid foundation in the practice of composition, and ideally will have familiarity with the theory and practice of tutoring writing in developmental and transfer-level college classes.
Intern III	The primary function and role of an Intern III is to provide students with academic support relative to their assignments for a course and to provide students with advanced study skills and techniques. The advanced tutor must demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of MLA style and of college-level standards of academic writing and editing. The Intern III will work in the English Department Writing Center or at one of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) locations. They should

	be comfortable working with students from diverse backgrounds and who have a range of abilities, and have some knowledge of working with students with disabilities.
	Tutors at the Intern III level will possess a high level of knowledge of the writing process, of MLA format, and of the conventions and standards of college-level academic writing and editing. They will provide one-on-one tutoring and support for Palomar College students and assist those students with writing assignments for any Palomar College class. They may also lead study or discussion sessions and/or assist with developing workshops for Palomar College students. The Intern III will visit classes by instructor request to provide information about the writing support services offered at the Writing Center or at that campus' Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), and will also communicate with the Writing Center Director and Tutor Coordinator as needed.
	Intern III tutors will also participate independently and/or collaboratively in regular staff professional development opportunities, including trainings, meetings, workshops, and collaborations with English faculty and/or faculty in other disciplines (for instance, learning information related to APA or Chicago documentation style). It is also expected that Intern III tutors will check in on a regular basis on the Writing Center's Canvas space and participate in ongoing professional development, evaluation, and assessment.
	Tutors at the Intern III level may also be hired as Embedded Tutors upon request of the instructor of an English class and based on the tutor's superior performance in 200-level English classes and the instructor's assessment of their knowledge and skills. As Embedded Tutors, they will communicate promptly and dependably with the instructor, attend class sessions, assist in facilitating individual or small-group work during class (as directed by the instructor), and be available for one additional paid hour per week to meet with students from the course individually or in small groups.
	The Intern III should possess a strong foundation in the practice of composition, and ideally will have familiarity with the theory and practice of tutoring writing in and/or teaching developmental and college-level courses. As such, the Intern III will also mentor interns at the lower levels and act as a resource to our less-experienced tutors.
Intern IV	The primary function and role of an Intern IV is to provide students with academic support relative to their assignments for a course and to provide students with advanced study skills and techniques. The tutor at this most advanced level must

demonstrate a superior knowledge of MLA style and of college-level standards of writing. The Intern IV will work in the English Department Writing Center or at one of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) locations. They should be comfortable working with students from diverse backgrounds and who have a range of abilities, and have some knowledge of working with students with disabilities.

Tutors at the Intern IV level will provide one-on-one tutoring and support for Palomar College students and assist those students with writing assignments for any Palomar College class. They may also lead study or discussion sessions and/or assist with developing workshops for Palomar College students. The Intern IV will visit classes by instructor request to provide information about the writing support services offered at the Writing Center or at that campus' Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), and will also communicate with the Writing Center Director and Tutor Coordinator as needed.

Intern IV tutors will also participate independently and/or collaboratively in regular staff professional development opportunities, including trainings, meetings, workshops, and collaborations with English faculty and/or faculty in other disciplines (for instance, learning information related to APA or Chicago documentation style). It is also expected that Intern IV tutors will check in on a regular basis on the Writing Center's Canvas space and participate in ongoing professional development, evaluation, and assessment.

The Intern IV should possess a strong foundation in composition theory and practice, and ideally will have familiarity with the theory and practice of tutoring writing in and/or teaching developmental and college-level courses. As such, the Intern IV will assist the Writing Center Director and Tutor Coordinator in preparing, mentoring, or training other tutors.

E. Tutor Appointment Scheduling Process at the San Marcos Campus

Tutoring is by appointment at the Writing Center on the San Marcos campus, and is on a drop-in basis at the North Education Center TLC, the South Education Center TLC, the Escondido TLC, and the Camp Pendleton TLC.

So that you understand how our appointment scheduling process works, here is some information about how the San Marcos Writing Center front desk handles the process. Please note that these procedures are also subject to change.

- **Advance appointment sign-ups**
  - Appointment scheduling sheets are in the purple binder on the counter.
  - Up to two weeks of appointment sheets are in the binder; there should always be a minimum of one full week.
  - Students can only sign up in advance for 1 session per day.
  - The scheduling sheet is transferred from the binder to the front desk and is used to manage appointments for the day.
- **Walk-in appointments**
  - Students who walk in and want to schedule a same-day appointment check with front desk person to find available time slot tutor.
  - If there is a spot available, the front desk person writes the student's name on the scheduling sheet; if there are no open appointment spots, the front desk person gives student the option of being added to the waitlist.
- **Waitlist/second appointment sheet**
  - This sheet is used for walk-in appointments when there are no open spots available on the scheduling sheet for that day.
  - This sheet is also used to assign additional time with a tutor.
  - The front desk person will add student's name to the waitlist and tell them they will be notified if time with tutor becomes available.
  - Tutor time is allotted on a first-come first-served basis; student needs to be in the room for time to be allotted.
  - The front desk person will check the appropriate column to indicate whether the student is a walk-in or seeking additional time with a tutor.
  - When a student from the waitlist is placed with a tutor, the front desk person will indicate the session start time and the tutor's name.
- **Pre-session form**
  - When students come to the Writing Center, the front desk person asks if they are here for a tutoring appointment.
  - If yes, once students sign in on the computer, the front desk person gives them a pre-session information form to fill out and return to the front desk.
  - Once a student completes the form and returns it to the front desk, the person working the desk directs the student to take a seat at a table or

computer then writes the student's location and appointment time on the form and brings it to the tutor before the scheduled appointment time.

- **Additional time with a tutor**
    - o Students can sign up for one session in advance, and if there is time available may have one additional session with a tutor for a total of 2 sessions or maximum of one hour with a tutor in one day.
    - o If a student wants additional time with a tutor that essentially extends their appointment time, tutors may continue working with student and indicate additional time on their tutor registration sheet. Tutors may also suggest signing up for a non-consecutive appointment so that student is encouraged to work independently to apply feedback from initial session before working with tutor for additional time.
- **Cancelling or changing pre-scheduled appointments**
    - o If someone cancels an appointment, the front desk person erases the student's name from the schedule sheet so that spot is available for another student.
    - o If someone already has an appointment scheduled but comes in earlier wanting to work with a tutor, they may CHANGE their appointment time if there is an earlier spot available. If there is no earlier spot, the student has the option of going on the waitlist to see if tutor time opens up. In this case, the student name remains in the originally scheduled space until they are placed with a tutor. At that point the name should be erased from the scheduling sheet to make that spot available for another student.
    - o If a student who has given up a pre-scheduled appointment for an earlier appointment wants additional time with a tutor they may request that AFTER they have met with the tutor. At that time, the student's name should be added to the waitlist by the front desk person and the column checked for "2nd" appointment.
- **No shows**
    - o If someone does not show up for a scheduled appointment, that time becomes available for someone on the waitlist. In this case, it is important that waitlisted students are placed with tutors as quickly as possible to ensure they receive as much of a full session as possible.

F. Daily Work Procedures for San Marcos Writing Center Tutors

- **Clip board with Tutor Registration Sheet**
  - At the start of each session, tutors should have students sign the Tutor Registration Sheet next to the appointment time. Tutors will find their daily Registration sheets on a clipboard at the front desk at the start of each shift.
- **Tutor appointment pre-session forms**
  - Students fill out forms that help them identify where they are in the writing process and what they want to focus on in their session with a tutor. These forms are also used to communicate to the tutor the name and location of student and the appointment time.
- **Start times**
  - Appointments are scheduled every half-hour, with start times at 5 and 35 after the hour. The length for a session is 25 minutes. The start time is meant to give tutors a brief pause between sessions. When a tutor is in a session with one student, the form for the next session is given to the tutor on the hour/half-hour to signal that it is time to wrap-up and have a moment before moving on to the next scheduled appointment.
  - It is important that tutors start a session with a student on time, and if a tutor does not have back-to-back appointments and a student is ready before the start time at 5 or 35 after the hour, appointments can and should begin early. One final point to note is that the clock in the WC is slow; do not wait for the clock to hit the 5- or 35-minute mark to head over to a student.
- **Check in at the front desk if you finish early or if you leave the WC at a time other than a scheduled break**
  - If there are students on the waitlist and a tutor finishes a scheduled appointment early, it is possible to schedule another student into the remaining time. Please check in with the front desk when you have finished early, or if you need to leave the WC at a time other than your scheduled break.
- **Downtime between tutoring sessions**
  - There are often times when a tutor's appointment schedule is not full and there is time between tutoring sessions. This time should be used in one of the following ways: log on to the Tutor Lounge on Canvas to review and add posts; review articles and information on tutoring practice; work on handouts, or researching resources that might be posted on the WC website; review a writing handbook and tab sections that you find yourself referring to frequently; or do other Writing Center- or tutoring-related activities.

- **Breaks**
  - Because the San Marcos Writing Center tutoring sessions are by appointment, breaks for tutors working these shifts are indicated on the Tutor Registration Form. Paid breaks are 15 minutes for a shift under 6 hours; unpaid breaks are 30 minutes for shifts of 6 hours or more.
- **Pay period**
  - The monthly pay period is for hours worked between the 25th of one month and the 24th of the next month. The one exception is June/July, which have separate time sheets since the new fiscal year at Palomar always begins on July 1. Time sheets are circulated in the week before the 24th of the month.
- **Interaction with students outside the WC**
  - On occasion students request to work with a tutor outside of the Writing Center. It is our policy that tutors do not work with students outside of the Writing Center whom they have worked with here. It is also recommended that tutors do not share personal contact information with students.

G. Script for Classroom Visits/Presentations on the San Marcos Campus

Part of how we let students know about tutoring services is through brief classroom presentations. Generally these are scheduled by instructors towards the start of the semester. Tutors are often asked to make these five-minutes presentations. Below is a script that you can use when you visit those classrooms to talk about the San Marcos Writing Center and the services that we offer.

General Information
The Writing Center is open to all Palomar College students. Students may come to work independently as well as to work with tutors. We have computers, tables, comfy chairs, and a Go-Print station for printing. We do ask that all students sign-in at the front desk when they come in for tutoring and also sign-out when they leave. Food and drinks are allowed in the Writing Center, but are not allowed anywhere near the computers.

Tutors and Appointments
Writing Center tutors are all highly qualified and able to assist you at all stages of the writing process—from brainstorming and understanding assignments, to organizing or expanding your ideas and understanding grammar issues. Tutors also help with many types of writing projects, from research papers in either MLA or APA format to scholarship essays and transfer applications.

Writing tutors are available at the San Marcos Writing Center as well as at the North and South Centers and at the Escondido TLC. For students wishing to work with tutors at the San Marcos Writing Center it is recommended that they schedule appointments in advance; walk-in appointments are based on availability. To make a tutoring appointment, stop by H-102 call the number on the bookmark (760-744-1150 ext. 2778).

Writing Center hours and location are also on our bookmarks: we are located in H-102 and are open Monday-Thursday until 5:30 P.M., with the last tutoring appointment being 5:00 P.M. On Fridays, we close at 2:00 P.M.

Appointments are 25 minutes long, and students may sign-up for one appointment per day. Plan to arrive at least five minutes prior to your appointment so that you have time to sign-in and prepare for your session. If you are late for your appointment, your time slot may be given to another student waiting to work with a tutor.

Printing and what to bring to your appointment
Prepare for your tutoring appointment by having a printed copy of your paper and the assignment directions or prompt. A paper version of your writing is preferred to a computer version because it allows for you to take notes during your session.

We do have a printer for student use; however, you will need to have money already loaded on your Palomar GoPrint account because we do not have a way to pay for printing here. Limited free printing is available at the Student Union (in room SU-28) if you have an activity card.

Proof that you have worked with a tutor
Many students are required by their instructors to meet with a writing tutor, or are given extra credit for doing so. Slips that serve as proof of a tutoring come from the tutors, so make sure to ask for a slip at the end of your session if you need proof for your instructor of your visit.

H. Information about Palomar's English Department Composition and Literature Classes

Our English Department offers a variety of literature classes, as well as a full sequence of composition classes. Beginning in Fall of 2019, the English Department will no longer be offering any courses below English 100. The current sequence of English composition classes is as follows:

- **<u>English 100W (English 100 + English 49)/English Composition + Reading and Writing for College Composition</u>** – Fall 2019 is the first semester that this six-unit course will be offered, and it was developed in response to the AB-705 legislation to move students through their transfer-level courses more quickly. The class combines elements of the former English 10 class (elements of grammar and sentence-level work) and English 50 (paragraphs and short essays) with extra support, and it is considered to be a co-requisite support class.
  - o The English Department's Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) for English 100W are:

    1. Analyze written arguments.

    2. Write coherent, well-developed analytical essays.

    3. Incorporate source material into at least one research-based essay and apply MLA guidelines for documentation.

    4. Write clear, effective sentences demonstrating sensitivity to language.

- **<u>English 100/English Composition</u>** – this four-unit course is Palomar's transfer-level composition/writing course; the final paper is usually a six- to ten-page research essay in MLA format
  - o The English Department's Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) for English 100 are:

    1. Analyze written arguments.

    2. Write coherent, well-developed analytical essays.

    3. Incorporate source material into at least one research-based essay and apply MLA guidelines for documentation.

    4. Write clear, effective sentences demonstrating sensitivity to language.

- **<u>English 202/Critical Thinking and Composition</u>** – this four-unit course is the second transfer-level course and it focuses on writing about *non-fiction*
    - The English Department's Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) for English 202 are:

      1. Demonstrate an ability to write analytical essays based on comprehension and interpretation of primary and secondary texts.

      2. Analyze and synthesize information and arguments from a variety of texts, including scholarly sources, to develop research-based essays in MLA form.

- **<u>English 203/Critical Thinking and Composition through Literature</u>** – this four-unit course is the second transfer-level course and it focuses on writing about *fiction and literature*
    - The English Department's Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) for English 203 are the same as they are for English 202:

      1. Demonstrate an ability to write analytical essays based on comprehension and interpretation of primary and secondary texts.

      2. Analyze and synthesize information and arguments from a variety of texts, including scholarly sources, to develop research-based essays in MLA form.

- **<u>Literature classes</u>** – the English Department's literature classes are all three units
    - The English Department's Student Learning Outcome (SLO) for all of its literature classes is
        1. Demonstrate the ability to analyze literary texts by using close-reading skills.

I. General Guidelines for Tutoring Sessions

o **When you meet with students, be mindful of the stages of the writing process:**
   o <u>prewriting</u> ~ generating ideas: freewriting, brainstorming, clustering, researching, observing; organization/outline; ideas; purpose; thesis; topic sentences
   o <u>writing</u> ~ an initial/rough draft
   o <u>revising</u> ~ global revision (the big picture ~ content, organization, tone; thesis; supporting details; sentence-level revision (wordiness, sentence structure /sentence variety, usage)

o **Professionalism** ~ report to work on time; call beforehand if prevented from working and send a follow-up email; keep your voice down; tidy up your workstation; never write any part of a student's paper; never comment negatively to students about a teacher's methods/assignments/personality/grading policies; don't guess at the grade the paper may get; don't criticize the grade that the teacher has given a paper

o **Various roles of the tutor:**
   o <u>ally</u> (sympathetic, encouraging, supportive)
   o <u>coach</u> (the work needs to be the student's own, encourage them to think through problems and find their own answers, suggest ways of accomplishing tasks)
   o <u>commentator</u> (describe process and progress in a broader context than the writer might otherwise see)
   o <u>collaborator</u> (sharing ideas with a particularly sharp writer, but don't take over the paper)
   o <u>writing expert</u> (you know more than the student, but it's okay to admit when you don't know something ~ find out the answer)
   o <u>learner</u> (knowing little or nothing about a topic makes you a good audience for a paper – the writer can answer your questions and clarify writing)

o **Working with various learning styles:**
   • <u>visual</u>—point to, circle, highlight, take notes, use color
   • <u>auditory</u>—read aloud, repeat/rephrase instructions, ask writer to paraphrase what you said
   • <u>kinesthetic</u> ~ ask students to do the writing/underlining /highlighting, have students point to material as you talk about, use file cards, use self-stick notes for parts of the paper

I. At the Start of a Tutoring Session

1. Introduce yourself to the student and create a welcoming presence

2. Sit side-by-side (you are an ally, not an authoritarian figure)

3. Have a pen, a pad/scrap paper, a grammar handbook, and a dictionary nearby

4. Demonstrate your enthusiasm – you are looking forward to working with the student

5. Explain what it is that writing tutors do

6. Find out the student's reason for coming and the writing assignment (What can I help you with? What assignment are you working on? What are you writing about?); for those of you working on the main campus, the pre-session form that you will be given will contain this information

  - If the student doesn't have the course syllabus or assignment sheet, you could ask the student to check the Canvas site for that course to see if those documents have been posted there by the instructor

7. Give the student control of the paper – keep the paper in front of the student; let the student read the paper aloud; if at a computer, let the writer control the keyboard; you and the writer will set a tentative agenda for the session

8. As you talk with the writer and look through the assignment, make a list of concerns and items to cover – prioritize the list

J. Responding to the Student Paper

1. Use three powerful tools:

    1. <u>active listening</u> – what I'm hearing you say is . . ., it sounds like . . .
    2. <u>responding as a reader</u> – I'm a little confused here, I get lost here, is that what you meant, can you tell me more here, so what/why does anyone need to know about that)
    3. <u>be a naïve reader</u> – act like you need more information all the time, stop at the end of a paragraph to summarize/explain what you anticipate will follow, use silence/wait time to indicate that the writer is expected to think and arrive at answers on his/her own

2. Avoid negative comments about a writer's topic – writer may have personal reasons for it

3. Honor the confidentiality of the tutoring relationship (don't comment on or discuss writer or the paper with teacher or in front of other people)

4. Don't overload/overwhelm the student ~ prioritize (work on the big problems first) *

5. Use opening questions: What works best in your paper? What do you like best or feel most satisfied about? What works least in the paper? Which part did you have trouble writing? Which parts don't feel right?

6. Try tri-level response:

   o <u>first-level response</u> ~ respond like an ordinary reader ("I'm confused ~ explain this")
   o <u>second-level response</u> ~ express your reaction as a reader and explain the reasons for your reactions ("I got lost here because you did not indicate clearly enough the relationships between these two statements")
   o <u>third-level response</u> ~ suggest how to solve the problem

7. Be positive – praise where you can

8. Be honest – limit compliments to specific parts of the paper

9. Do not rewrite the paper – circle incorrect words and grammar errors or have the student circle them, rather than doing the work for the student

10. Consider using checklists – strengths/focus/organization/argument/ support/style/grammar, punctuation, spelling

11. Give the writer a chance to solve a problem before you offer specific solutions

12. Have comments in the margin ~ make sure they are legible, avoid terse comments like awkward/unclear

I. Concluding the Session

1. Summarize the ideas for revision ~ have positive as well as negative

2. Ask the student if he/she has additional questions

3. Remind the writer he/she can return to the Writing Center with another draft

4. Be friendly as you say goodbye

J. Specific Student Problems

1. Lacks a complete draft ~ ask *why?*

2. Isn't sure of the assignment ~ review the assignment with the writer

3. Can't get started ~ discuss strategies for fighting it (break down into smaller pieces, rewards, shut out the voice of criticism, freewrite /brainstorm/cluster); use structured questioning (if it is a character analysis, ask, "Who is the main character? What is her or his problem? Does she or he solve it?")

4. Has difficulty in reading ~ go over the text together

5. Has a passive/unresponsive attitude:

    *   empathize (you too have been in the same position, having to accomplish some task in college which you did not relish)
    *   acknowledge the student's lack of interest in writing (I hate to write ~ you say, well, okay, but the fact that you came here means you want to get a decent grade, right?)
    *   help the student talk about his/her fears ("I'm a terrible writer" ~ you say, "I wish I had a dollar for every student who makes that statement")
    *   if too distracted – ask if there's something more pressing and if the answer is yes, recommend person reschedules be patient
    *   remind the writer you are there to help
    *   make the session short but helpful
    *   engage the writer as much as possible
    *   recognize even your best efforts may not change writer's attitude

6. Has antagonistic attitude ~ be patient; allow writer to vent; acknowledge the anger, if writer becomes verbally aggressive, politely tell him/her you're not willing to accept such behavior; remind writer your suggestions can be accepted or rejected

7. Has examples of plagiarism ~ become familiar with the school's code of academic integrity, explain importance of carefully taking notes from sources, realize some writers concentrate on content rather than citing, explain that acknowledging sources is an ethical issue, speak with the Writing Center Director if unsure how to handle it

8. Has writing anxiety ~ present yourself as a sympathetic ally, tell of your own writing frustrations and satisfaction of producing a well-written paper, explain the writing process (start soon, allow plenty of time), help writer break the assignment into a sequence of specific/ manageable tasks and set up a schedule to complete these parts, suggest that

writer sets firm writing appointments with self and build in rewards, remind writer that a rough draft is rough

9. Brings in a longer paper ~ break into smaller, more easily achievable tasks; ask the writer to prioritize the writing difficulties, ask the writer to identify a manageable portion of the paper with these difficulties; don't feel obligated to get through the whole paper

10. Comes in at the last minute before paper is due ~ be kind and sympathetic, consider other options, help set goals for future papers

K. Things to Check

1. The draft meets all the objectives of the assignment (a student may omit part of the assignment)

2. The paper has a strong thesis (may be too general or buried too deep in the body of paper); if not, suggest the student review the keywords of the assignment (compare, argue,...); help the student clarify his/her ideas about the topic; explain that the introductory paragraph should address these ideas

3. There is depth to the paper ~ enough support (facts, stories, examples, . . .)

4. The essay is organized ~ time, space, order of importance; have a student list main points/do outline after writing the draft

5. The writer avoids stylistic problems ~ the choice of words (formal, informal, colloquial, academic), wordiness; other elements of academic style (no contractions, no colloquial language, no use of "I think/I feel")

6. The writer has edited for grammar/punctuation/spelling problems — read aloud; point out the problem once, then let the student find the same problem later; explain that such errors distract readers from the paper's content; be flexible with your vocabulary (fused/run-on)

7. The paper avoids inappropriate topics/offensive language – be patient, remind writer he/she is writing for an academic community, respond as a reader, asked the writer to respond as a reader (imagine yourself as a member of your audience ~ how might you respond to this statement), show writer how to make language more flexible, suggest student should check with teacher about the topic/use of language if he/she insists on doing it his/her own way

L. Other Circumstances

1. <u>Nonstandard dialect and ESL students</u> ~ standard American English is the dialect of the American academic world, other institutions, and businesses which require formal written English

- always remain aware of the writer's feelings – refer to usage as "inappropriate" rather than "wrong" or "incorrect"
- an ESL student may be reluctant to ask you a question, to admit he/she doesn't understand something, may require different personal space
- an ESL student may have a different way of presenting information (indirect)
- <u>Strategies</u> – give directions plainly, ask the person to explain what you have said, rephrase the comments if the student doesn't understand rather than raising your voice to repeating the same words, use a simple dictionary, brush up on your grammar, watch for peculiar connotations, watch for plagiarism (in some cultures borrowing from other sources is okay), give sympathy and encouragement, rephrase comments that confuse students, noticed student expressions and body language, be patient, respond first to the content and organization rather than sentences, realize some writers may regard you as an expert and expect you to provide the answers, don't overwhelm with a lot of advice, take special care to establish a comfortable rapport, give directions plainly – watch expression and ask questions to see if he/she comprehends your explanations, ask him or her to explain what you have said or to give you an example, it may be helpful for you to serve as a scribe ~ jot down key words or phrases in the writer's words, don't focus only on mechanical errors

2. <u>Students lacking basic writing skills</u> – these students focus on personal content, they rely on clichés, they're unfamiliar with academic writing/ argumentation, they have many errors on the sentence level, or they don't know how to support their points

- <u>Strategies</u> –use the same ones as with ESL/second dialect student: identify group of similar errors rather than individual ones, try to understand the reasons for the errors – the person either lacks knowledge or is using an invented system of writing, respect student's intelligence, be supportive/respectful/patient/encouraging, acknowledge what the writer does well, help person understand the writing process starts with messiness (he/she doesn't have to produce perfectly formed ideas from the start), have writer read the paper aloud, do not overwhelm writer with too much information or too many suggestions, develop a strategy for the writer to cope with problems

3. <u>Students with learning disabilities</u> ~ if the student admits a problem and you are not successful with him/her, refer to person on campus who can help students with learning disabilities; ask what you can do that will best help the writer – and be sure to explain things in a way that makes sense for that particular writer's favored learning style; be patient and repeat if necessary; make lists or outlines or notes that could later help the writer; support and praise often

4. <u>Returning students</u> – they are often disciplined and organized, many have a greater tolerance for criticism; however, some may lack confidence and have anxiety about starting over

- <u>Strategies</u> ~ don't talk down to older students; begin by asking some questions to break the ice; see if writer wants comprehensive reviews of errors; be considerate of their time; be sensitive to their anxiety; be aware of age differences and your demeanor; help writers use real-world experience appropriate to his/her academic paper; set the agenda and summarize the session (person may be very goal-oriented); do not allow the adult learner to become too dependent on your help

5. <u>Good student writers</u>

- <u>Strategies</u> – find out what the student is hoping to accomplish through the writing assignment beyond a grade since he/she may view the writing as a creative act; ask if the person can think of other possible strategies for making the paper even more effective; check for the clarity of the argument (coherence can make a difference in grades); check for style ~ parallelism, interesting word choice, creative openers and conclusions; identify and discuss particularly strong passages

M. Students from Classes Other than English

The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors includes useful checklists for the following types of assignments (page numbers refer to the fifth edition):

1. Research papers (p. 88)

2. Lab reports and scientific papers (p. 89)

3. Argument or position papers (p. 90)

4. Literature papers (p. 91)

5. Book/film/play reviews (p. 91-92)

6. PowerPoint presentations (p. 92-93)

7. Resumes (p. 94-96)

8. Cover letters (p. 96)

9. Essays of application (p. 98)

N. Instructor Expectations

1. If tutoring in a field that is new to you, try to become familiar with instructor expectations regarding format/style/documentation of that field

2. Understand the instructor's criteria for an "A" paper

3. Try to meet with instructors who routinely send their students to the tutoring center

4. Check to see if instructor has sent the Writing Center a list of assignments/criteria sheet

O. Unclear/Poorly Designed Assignments

1. Sometimes the page limit will be unrealistic given what the student is asked to accomplish in the assignment

2. Other assignments may require students to write about unfamiliar subjects

3. If the above are the case, you may want to ask the director to contact the instructor

4. Suggest to the student he/she should check with the instructor after class

P. For Further Help

1. Check out the website for the International Writing Centers Association (writingcenters.org)

2. This organization publishes *Writing Center Journal* and *Writing Lab Newsletter*

Q. Good Questions for Tutors to Think about

1. See page 115-118 in *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* (fifth edition)

2. Discuss with other tutors or Jeannette or Leanne if you have questions