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## Overview

This is a one-hour meeting for discovering, discussing, testing, and implementing tutoring practices that are informed by writing center, composition, new media, and educational research. Our time together will serve as a practical way for us to share information and workshop challenges related to tutoring, technology, and the projects each of you manage or work on.

## Goals

Engaging in discussion, preparing readings, and attending the consultant meetings this semester will enable you to:

- Understand how writing and communication processes work to promote learning across disciplines;
- Recognize how interpersonal dynamics are informed by identity (race, class, gender, age, sexuality, language background, etc.) and expectations;
- Identify and prioritize areas of concern in writing and communication projects;
- Apply and modify tutoring techniques to create a sense of shared goals and empathy within tutoring sessions;
- Find ways to build on your own personal aptitudes to practice tutoring approaches that work with your strengths and preferences;
- Facilitate your own growth and maturity as an individual and collaborative writer, communicator, and researcher.

## Requirements

1. Participate in the weekly seminar by attending, contributing to discussions, asking questions, and actively listening;
2. Complete the readings/viewings and projects with a high standard of quality, creativity, and integrity;
3. Use the meetings to inform your writing center praxis and bring your insights/questions/concerns about your work to the meeting.

## Evaluation

Your position as a consultant here is multi-faceted. Assessments of your work will be drawn from these crucial categories: dependability/reliability, initiative, preparation, professionalism, attitude, interpersonal skills, and overall performance. As director, my responsibilities include managing the workplace environment (physical space, technology, and atmosphere), communicating expectations, coordinating training and resources, and managing workloads.

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Fall 2015

W 12-1, 3-5

Facilitator: Joy Bracewell, Ph.D.

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Phone: 256-216-6670

Office: Library, RM 212

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## Materials

Ryan, L., & Zimmerelli, L. (2010). *The Bedford guide for writing tutors* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.  
Other articles & texts, TBA.

## Meetings

| 12-1           | 3-4               |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Jennifer Bravo | Brittany Aldridge |
| Jensie Britt   | Casey Hillis      |
| Ben Montgomery | Lauren Reynolds   |

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### 8/26—Meet in CB 203

CRFs, Ch. 1: The Writing Center as Workplace, Tutoring Online Tech

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### 9/2—Meet in Library Tech Room

Directive vs. Non-directive Tutoring: Dr. Robert Koch, Univ. of North Alabama

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### 9/9—Meet in CB 203

CRFs, Timesheets, Ch. 2: The Writing Process, LOCs vs. HOCs

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### 9/16—Meet in Library Tech Room

Linguistic Diversity: Dr. James Gadberry

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### 9/23

Ch. 3: Inside the Session, Role-Playing

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### 9/30

Outsourcing Research: Ms. Jennifer Williams—what is the consultant's role?

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### 10/7

Career Center: Ms. Saralyn Mitchell

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### 10/14

CRFs, Ch. 4: Helping Writers throughout the Writing Process, Project Updates

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## Announcements/Business:

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8/26—Meet in CB 203: Before the Meeting, please go to the Body Language Quiz and test your ability to “read” emotional responses:

[http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/ei\\_quiz/#1](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/ei_quiz/#1)

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- Forging Towards Multimodality—Writing Center Contest: <http://www.athens.edu/writing-center/contest/>
  - CRFs: template, professionalism checkers (Ben reads Jennifer’s, Jennifer reads Jense’s, Jense reads John’s) (Casey/Lauren read Brittany’s)
  - Projects: GDrive (Brittany—Social Media, Jennifer—Faculty Syllabi/Assignments, Resources for Writing, Jense—Team Member, Inventory & Weekly Quote, Casey—Team Member & E-mail organizer, Ben—Newsletter, Lauren—Blog)
  - Tutoring Online (Body Language Quiz, Article, WOnline)
- 

9/2 —Meet in Library Technology Study Room, 215 (Upstairs) Read: TUTORS’ COLUMN “There Is No Greater Urge Than the Urge to Edit Someone Else’s Writing ” <https://wlnjournal.org/archives/v24/24.2.pdf> and “We Don’t Proofread, so What Do We Do? A Report on Survey Results” <https://wlnjournal.org/archives/v37/37.3-4.pdf>

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- Dr. Robert Koch—Writing in the Disciplines, Tutoring Strategies, Scientific Writing
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9/9—Meet in CB 203 Visit from Julie Martin, Campus Security

Using Titles: <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2011/11/what-are-mrs-and-ms-short-for/>

Dangling Participles: <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2011/09/participles-how-not-to-dangle/>

Online Learning: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7KFFj8VF0&index=8&list=PLB5BFB09A81A4CA50>

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- Roles as an Online Consultant (Jense & BC), Today’s Meet
  - Timesheets
- 

9/16— Meet in Library Technology Study Room, 215 (Upstairs): Before the meeting, please go to the Harvard’s Project

Implicit and take the Skin Tone IAT: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/> (you can do so by clicking on the left bottom option: continue as guest; then choose to proceed; finally, choose Skin- tone IAT from the list of tests) **This activity is to raise your awareness only; you won’t be required to discuss your results if you do not wish to do so.**

Also, watch a clip from “Writing Across Borders” and think of how it may or may not have changed your own perspective on the assumptions you bring with you to academic discourse and perhaps to tutoring sessions: <http://writingcenter.oregonstate.edu/view-clips-film> Please also view the very short Prezi on Hyphens vs. Dashes by Kiran Rampersand: <https://prezi.com/v4pp06esfk-q/hyphens-versus-dashes/>

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- Dr. James Gadberry—Linguistic Diversity
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9/23—**Meet in Library Technology Study Room, 215.** Also, read Kenneth Bruffee’s “What Being A Writing Peer Tutor Can Do for You,” and Ch. 3 of Gillespie & Learner’s guide, “The Tutoring Process.” View Nairita Nandy’s brief powerpoint “Editing vs. Tutoring”

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- Role-Playing
  - Discuss Shadowing Reflection Task
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9/30—Meet in Library Technology Study Room, 215. Read Ch. 2 of Gillespie & Learner’s guide, “The Writing Process.” **Watch: Prefixes, Suffixes:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOJrjNR7ZM> ...& more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fiEszFPRE8> 6:46-10:00

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- Librarian Jennifer Williams with Casey Hillis—Consultant Strategies for Outsourcing Research Help
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10/7—Meet in Library Technology Study Room, 215. Look at Vishal Mummigatti’s powerpoint on the “Elevator Pitch” and powerpoints on “Public Speaking.”

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- Director of the Career Center, Saralyn Mitchell—Tutoring Résumés, Cover Letters, and CVs
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10/14—Meet in Library Technology Study Room, 215. Read Bedford Guide, Ch. 4 & 5

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- Project Updates
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10/28—Meet in ? Read: Read Bedford Guide, Ch. 6, Murphy & Sherwood: Part II “New Media Matters: Tutoring in the Late Age of Print” by Jackie McKinney (344- 61). Peruse: Handout on Apps and Websites for College Success

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11/4— Meet in ?

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- Jean Martin, Disability Services & Lisa Philippart, Counseling Services
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11/11—Shadowing Reflection Discussion

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12/4

| Date Range  | Task  | Written Work (Due 11/11)   |
|-------------|---|--|
| 09/15-11/11 | Complete a minimum of three observation sessions: two may be from online transcripts and one must be from a face-to-face session in the center. Take notes. | Please take notes about every shadowing experience. Then, write a one/two-page summary of your observations during your shadowing experiences. This document is very open-ended and may be informal. Below I've listed some content suggestions that might be helpful to your reader:<br>*a description of the project<br>*what tips/methods/big picture considerations you think the tutee gained<br>*if you saw any problem-solving skills that were new to you<br>*how you would handle a similar situation in the future |

**Athens State**  
Writing Center  
Professional Development

**Dr. Robert T. Koch Jr.**

Associate Professor

of English

University of North Alabama

September 2, 2015



# Goals

- Explore the content of Writing Instruction
- Explore directed and non-directed tutoring strategies.
- Explore how these strategies affect thinking about Global and Local issues.
- Consider ways to engage reluctant clients.
- Consider how to prepare to meet the needs of writers and readers across the disciplines.

# The Content of Writing



# Writing Process

- Prewriting
- Writing
- Rewriting
- Invention
  - Listing
  - Clustering
  - Freewriting
  - Outlining
- Drafting
- Revision
- Editing

# Global v. Local Concerns

- Global Concerns

- Audience
- Purpose
- Thesis
- Organization
- Development
- Introduction & Conclusion

- Local Concerns

- Grammar
- Spelling
- Mechanics
- Punctuation

# Patterns in the Disciplines

- Introduction
- Thesis / Hypothesis
- Review of Literature
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion
- Limitations / Conclusion
- Narrative
- Description
- Compare & Contrast
- Classification
- Division
- Cause & Effect
- Problem & Solution
- Process
- Illustration



# How Do You Write?

- What do you do when you write in your discipline?
  - Genres?
  - Situation?
  - Time?
  - Process?
- Describe your discipline
  - Genre?
  - Style?
  - Voice?
- How and when did you learn to write in your discipline?





# Content v. Form

- Which is more important?
- Writing to Learn
  - Content over form
  - Grammar doesn't matter; knowledge does
  - Types
    - Journals
    - Response papers
    - Reflective papers
    - Homework
    - Tests & Quizzes
- Writing for the Discipline
  - Content AND Form
  - Types
    - Research papers & articles
    - Lab reports



# Directed or Non-Directed?



- What actions do we do when we tutor?
- Which of our actions are directed and which are non-directed?

# Engaging the Disengaged

- Active Listening
- Facilitating
- Wait Time



# WID Knowledge Building

- What is needed?
  - Forms & Genres
  - Style & Voice
  - Documentation Types (APA, CMS, CSE, ACS, AP, MLA, etc.)
- Where do we find it?
  - Talk with faculty
  - Texts in the classes
  - Journals
  - Guides on writing in the various disciplines
- Specialization
- Professional development

**The Grammar Lady**

**is  
watching  
you.**



# What about Grammar?

- Why do we focus on grammar?
  - Paper looks cleaner, faster
  - Not sure how to talk about larger issues
- Problems with this:
  - Doesn't develop skills in organization or development
  - Content may be wrong
  - Clean first, then cut?

READ ALL THE  
BOOKS!



# Strategic Reading

- Survey the text / Read for key words:
  - Table of Contents
  - Index
- Introductions
- Conclusions
- Targeted Sections
- Bold or Italics
- First & Last sentences of paragraphs
  - Where is the claim of each paragraph?
  - First step toward a reverse outline!



# References

- Barnett, R. W. & Blumner, J. S. (2008). *The Longman guide to writing center theory and practice*. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Bazerman, C. & Russell, D. R. (1994). *Landmark essays on writing across the curriculum*. Davis, CA: Hermagoras.
- Elbow, P. (1981). *Writing with power*. New York: Oxford.
- Emig, J. (1977). Writing as a mode of learning. *College Composition and Communication*, 28, 122-28.
- Friere. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Johnson, T. R. (2008). *Teaching composition: Background readings (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. New York: Bedford St. Martin's.





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- Lipka, S. (2014, July 17). What it takes to help students succeed. [Interview with Freeman Hrabowski III]. *Chronicle of Higher Education* <http://chronicle.com/article/Video-What-It-Takes-to-Help/147511/>
- Murphy, C. & Law, J. (1995). *Landmark essays on writing centers*. Davis, CA: Hermagoras.
- Robinson, F. P. (1970). *Effective study*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Ryan, L. & Zimmerelli, L. (2010). *The Bedford guide for writing tutors*. Boston, MA: Bedford St. Martin's.
- Villanueva, V. (1997). *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

## An Overview of Higher Order (Global) Concerns

Higher Order Concerns are so named because they are the first issues that writers must address in order to clearly communicate an idea. They are

1. Audience
2. Purpose
3. Thesis
4. Organization
5. Development
6. Introduction
7. Conclusion

### Audience

Audience awareness affects decisions about content, argument, style, and diction.

There are two types of audience:

1. Direct – Those the text is directed toward
2. Indirect – Incidental readers

Focus on Direct Audience first:

1. What is their knowledge level?
2. What is their experience level?
3. Will they have the same view as you, or a different one?

Write at the level of your reader. Educated readers expect in-depth content, complex arguments, and more developed style and diction. Less knowledgeable readers may require more explanations, illustrations, and clearer prose, perhaps with definitions.

### Purpose

In academia, the reason for writing is usually

- to inform (as in a report),
- to demonstrate knowledge (essay test), or, most often,
- to argue a point.

Keep your purpose in mind. As you write your paragraphs, *develop* your purpose: make arguments, supply illustrations, and build connections. Always ask:

1. Does this serve my purpose?
2. How does it serve my purpose?
3. Will my audience see my purpose?

### Thesis

This is an explicit, arguable statement that lays out the *purpose* and *organization* of the text. The thesis may be implied in literary works and stories, but in academic work, it's best to avoid implicit arguments and purposes.

Make a thesis

1. by identifying specific points you will argue (as in a 5-paragraph essay), OR
2. by creating a statement that includes your topic, purpose, and opinion, OR
3. by explaining your purpose as a function of the patterns of organization (see Organization)

A thesis is NEVER a question, though if you have a research question, the answer WILL be your thesis. A thesis may be found

1. at the end of the introduction for nearly all academic writing, or
2. at the beginning of the conclusion for especially volatile arguments.
3. at the very end of stories.

IF YOU CAN'T FIND YOUR THESIS:

1. Freewrite about your topic. Write non-stop until you have absolutely NOTHING left to say

2. Look at the conclusion; the thesis – your point – should be there.

WHY? Because narrative knowing is hard-wired, and the point in a story always comes at the end.

### Organization

The Rhetorical Modes of Thought (verbal and written), also called the Patterns of Organization, are the tools for organizing everything. They are

1. Narrative
2. Description
3. Comparison & Contrast
4. Classification
5. Division
6. Illustration
7. Cause & Effect
8. Process
9. Problem & Solution

Definition is achieved using one of the nine patterns above, and each of them must be prioritized according to the needs of your *audience* and *purpose*.

*Narrative* is the oldest way of knowing – essentially, it's storytelling. The thesis comes at the end. Very little academic writing is pure narrative, though narratives are often embedded in essays.

*Description* is the use of the sense: see, hear, taste, touch, smell – to give the reader a sense of space, time, and place.

*Comparison & Contrast* shows how items are similar (compare) and different (contrast). Order of Importance is critical to this pattern. There are two types:

1. Vertical (by item) – describe all significant qualities of the first item, then all of the second, third, etc. (ex. 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, etc.)
2. Horizontal (by quality) – describe each quality as it appears in each item, then go back and repeat. (ex. 1a, 2a, 3a, 1b, 2b, 3b, 1c, 2c, 3c, etc.)

*Classification* is taking a group of items and sorting them based on their characteristics. It's the basis for stereotyping (ex. classifying automobiles or classmates).

*Division* is breaking a single item into its separate parts (ex. computer parts, university departments).

*Illustration* is an example of a point, usually a specific or concrete example that the reader can connect with. Look for the words “for example” or “for instance” to set off an illustration.

*Cause & Effect* is a relationship between and among events. Look for keywords such as “because,” “since,” and “if...then.” Depending on the complexity, each cause and each effect could be a paragraph, or they could be grouped together. Like *compare & contrast*, order of importance is critical here.

*Process* is the set of instructions or directions in which something is done. Look for ordinal numbers (first, second, third, etc.), or steps (first, next, later, finally, etc). Although not necessarily part of

process, always consider the *order of importance* for presenting information using any of the patterns of organization.

*Problem & Solution* is similar to *cause & effect*, although causes and effects do not always result in problems or solutions. The keywords to look for, however, will likely be similar, although texts often state directly when something is a problem or a solution.

Always ask: what patterns work best, or is a standard practice, for making a particular argument to your audience (ex. Problem Solution for the scientific method).

### Development

If *organization* arranges paragraphs, development is what happens within them. A well-developed academic paragraph has three parts:

1. Topic/Summary Sentence or Claim
2. Evidence
3. Discussion / Connections

The *topic/summary sentence or claim* is one step in your argument, in your own words, made usually at the start but occasionally at the end of the paragraph.

*Evidence* is the proof for your claim. Types of evidence includes

1. summarized, paraphrased, or quoted second-hand sources (library or web research)
2. primary research (interviews or surveys)
3. narratives or anecdotes
4. charts, graphs, images

Your *discussion* or *connection* explains to the reader how the *evidence* ties to the *topic* and *thesis*. Remember, no matter how educated, NO reader knows exactly how you're analyzing or connecting these parts together. When an essay or paragraph is too long or too short, the problem is usually with development.

### Introduction & Conclusion\*

These are the bookends of the essay; they work together and shape each other, like a hook and reel in fishing. Consider writing them in pairs, using these or other strategies:

1. Tell a story up to the climactic moment (Intro), then finish it and discuss its relevance (Conc).
2. Provide surprising facts or data (Intro), then return to them and discuss their relevance (Conc).
3. Ask difficult or thought provoking questions (Intro) then return to them, maybe even answer them (Conc).
4. Scientific Method – Pose the *problem*, ask the research question, and give the *thesis* (Intro), then restate the problem and offer *solutions* and recommendations (Conc).
5. Try dividing the *Patterns of Organization* (*effects* in the Introduction, *causes* in the Conclusion, or show how something defies *classification*).

\*not original HOCS, but merit attention.

McAndrew, D.A. & Reigstad, T.J. (2001). Tutoring Writing: A Practical Guide for Conferences. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann-Boynton-Cook.

## General Quantitative/Qualitative Research Document Format

Most quantitative and some qualitative research papers, as they often appear in social science, life science, nursing, and other disciplinary publications, include the same general parts:

1. Introduction
2. Review of Literature
3. Methodology
4. Findings (also called Results)
5. Discussion
6. Conclusion
7. References (APA)
8. Appendices

This document gives you a basic overview; your discipline will have specific requirements that may deviate from what is provided here. Consult your professor for further specifications.

### Introduction

Establishes...

- What you are discussing.
- Why you are discussing it.
- Why your audience should listen.

What to do:

- State the problem you are going to address. This is sometimes referred to as identifying a gap in the disciplinary knowledge.
- Briefly discuss what the discipline (your audience) already knows about the subject. This may include background information such as summaries of definitions, histories, and/or theories that help your reader "get up to speed" on the problem.

- Briefly explain how you will fill this gap in the knowledge. What are your methods?
- State the principle results of the study.
- State your principle conclusions.

### Review of Literature

This is an expanded discussion of what the discipline (your audience) already knows. This may include more developed discussions of definitions, histories, and/or theories. It establishes for your reader:

1. That you understand the topic.
2. That your contribution is valuable.
3. That they do not have to read other literature to understand what you are studying and why you are studying it.

### Methodology

The methodology section should explain what you did in your research so that anyone who reads it can replicate what you did. Conciseness and detail are essential.

Consider all of the following in detail and address any of these that are appropriate for your study:

- What type of study did you choose and why?
- Who or what did you study and why? If a subject population needed to be protected according to Institutional Review Board requirements, how did you do it?
- How did you identify your pool?
- How did you identify your sample?
- What tools did you use to collect data, why, and how did you design them?

Should they be included in an appendix?

- Did you describe exactly what you did to collect data in as close to chronological order as possible?
- Did you describe the statistical or data analysis procedures that you used?

### Findings (sometimes called Results)

These are the answers that your research produced. This is not a presentation of raw data, but a presentation of the numbers or facts determined from the analysis.

- If you are using a hypothesis, this is where you state whether you accept or reject that hypothesis.
- Properly formatted tables and charts can make this a very short but very effective section. It is not always necessary to repeat in paragraph what you show in a chart. Text should lead the reader to the chart or table, not repeat what can already be seen.

### Discussion

Some disciplines forego the conclusion (especially life sciences). Discussion serves as their closing argument instead.

In this section, you should:

- Avoid repeating what you showed in the "Findings" section.
- Offer generalizations, principles, or relationships
- Identify points that lack correlation or offer exceptions.
- Show how your research agrees/disagrees with similar and/or prior studies.

## General Quantitative/Qualitative Research Document Format

- Discuss the impact of your work on theory and/or practice.
- Present summarized evidence for each claim/conclusion you make.
- Identify the significance of your paper; answer the question “So what?”

### Conclusion

If a conclusion is not required for your specific discipline, consider whether or not these questions can be answered in the “Discussion” section.

- What did you conclude – how did you “fill the knowledge gap?”
- What gap in the knowledge remains? What issues remain unresolved?
- What were the limitations of your study? What could not be determined from your research?
- What could be done with the ideas you have offered? What should readers do or consider when conducting additional research or taking an intellectual position?

It always pays to make sure this links to the introduction and that it’s clear and specific; this is a reader’s last impression of you.

### References

Also called Works Cited or Bibliography (depending on discipline and style)

### Appendices

Provide additional documents that are pertinent to, but not easily inserted into the body of the text. Appendices often include questionnaires, surveys, interview questions, sample documents, etc.

Submitted by Dr. Robert T. Koch Jr.  
September 5, 2008  
UNA Center for Writing Excellence  
<http://www.una.edu/writingcenter>

### References

Day, R. A. (1998). *How to write & publish a scientific paper* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Phoenix: Oryx.

Johnson Jr., W. A., Rettig, R. P., Scott, G. M., & Garrison, S. M. (2002). *The sociology student writer’s manual* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall

# Consultant Role Playing

{ Athens State Writing Center



## Uninterested Student

Student comes in for an appointment because he/she was offered extra points by a professor. Student does not bring any written piece of work. Student thinks that simply making and keeping an appointment will meet the professor's requirement.

Tutor: What do you do?

## Returning Adult Student

Adult learner schedules an appointment with a 15 page research paper and wishes to go over the whole paper during the session. The student has scheduled an hour online consultation. The paper is a mess! It is full of formatting errors, grammatical errors and plagiarism. The student has indicated that the paper is due in the next 24 hours. The student has trouble uploading the paper and the internet has been shaky on campus all day.

Tutor: What do you do?



## Agitated Student

Student is worried about paper. Does not know what the teacher wants.

Says the paper is supposed to be an analytical paper based on a topic of student's choosing. Student does not have an assignment sheet.

Tutor: What do you do?

## Your Worst Nightmare

Think of your personality, and academic strengths and weaknesses. Consider how you feel about tutoring in different situations thus far. Construct a scenario that you envision as your worst nightmare.

Then answer: What do you do?



# 3

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## THE TUTORING PROCESS

In this chapter, we want to take you through the entire tutoring process—from opening a session to closing one—and provide some powerful tutoring strategies. We'll expand on these strategies in subsequent chapters as we take you from anticipating (Chapter 4), observing (Chapter 5), and then participating in sessions, first with your fellow trainees (Chapter 6), and then on your own (Chapter 7). We'll also offer ways to think about specific situations you'll encounter: helping students with their reading (Chapter 8), helping nonnative English speakers (Chapter 9), analyzing your sessions (Chapter 11) and, finally, troubleshooting those many difficult situations that all tutors encounter (Chapter 13).

We'll frame our overview of the tutoring process by showing how tutors approach each stage of a session and contrast that with what editors might do in the same situation. As we mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the most important contrasts in writing center work is the difference between editing and tutoring. You are probably already a skilled editor, and your services are in demand from friends and classmates. Also, by no means do we want to denigrate the good work that many editors do (after all, you might choose that career); however, writing center work is based on the belief that writers need to do the writing, not their tutors. Like any of the contrasts we presented, the tutor/editor one is on a continuum, and there'll probably be instances outside of the writing center where you'll be closer to the editing end (and hopefully be paid for that challenging service). In the writing center, though, we advise you to tutor, not to edit; after all, it's the writer whose name is going on that paper, who's paying for those credits,

and who'll be getting the grade. But before we get too strident, we need to define in more detail the differences between editing and tutoring.

When you think of an editor, you might think of a cranky, hard-bitten, cigar-chomping Perry White, calling all the shots and making all the decisions, sending Clark Kent and Lois Lane off on assignments. Or you might think of someone who is responsible for making someone else's good writing perfect—that is, a proofreader. Real editors of various kinds probably wouldn't like these stereotypes of their work, but these descriptions come close to what a lot of friends do when they are asked to look over a paper. That is, your friend hands over the paper, picks up your last slice of pizza, and loses himself in *Days of Our Lives* while you go to work with a pen or a pencil.

You might limit your looking over of the paper to proofreading, and this usually involves making corrections for your friend; it may go beyond proofreading and involve suggesting a better word or a better sentence; it may even involve some advice: "I had a class with her, and she always wants you to . . ." When you do this kind of editing for your friends, you are assuming a large measure of control over their papers (and often they want you to). For tutors, however, this control can squelch any real learning on the writer's part.

### THE TUTOR DOES NOT—AND DOES— HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT

An important difference between editors and tutors has to do with the idea of being an expert. Editors are often seen as expert wordsmiths, always knowing the right word, the correct grammatical fix, or the key passage to delete. The writers you work with might indeed put you in this role, just as some of your friends might have, but tutoring expertise is quite different.

As a tutor, you don't have to be an expert on the subject matter of the paper the writer is working on, and you don't even have to be an expert on grammar and correctness—knowing that something isn't right is probably enough (though having a good working knowledge of English grammar and usage can often be helpful, particularly with nonnative English speakers who will know those rules quite well). But you do have to be an expert in some things, each of which we'll explain in more detail in this chapter: knowing how to set a good tone for the conference and making the writer feel comfortable; knowing which kinds of issues to address first; being patient and listening to the entire paper, since it's easy to get hung up on an early section when the real challenge might come later; knowing how to ask questions that are open-ended (not questions that can be answered with a yes or no) and that you really want answers to and don't know already; knowing techniques that let the writer make the decisions; knowing that

sometimes our questions take time to answer and having the patience to wait for the writer to come up with a reply; and knowing that when the writer revises, many of the problems with correctness will improve.

As a tutor, rather than as an editor, you'll have to know when more is needed—that is, when there are so many problems that you can't deal with them all in one session—and you'll have to know what to do with students who can't complete everything. You'll have to get a sense that with some writers, you can't address every last problem in the paper, and you'll have to be able to choose one or two to begin with, but then encourage the writer to come for more help. You'll have to know when a writer needs to come back after revision to work on correctness. You'll know that scheduling another appointment at the end of the session is a good way to help the writer stick to her resolve to revise and that the next session should be with you again, if schedules permit. You'll have to be sensitive to due dates; if the writer only has an hour, she may appreciate knowing that she needs to re-think her organization, but chances are she won't be able to do much about it, so you and she can focus on correctness. But you'll also have to know that it's a good idea to invite her back so she'll have a better sense of how to organize and what effect organization has on readers.

All of that is a lot to learn. But as you see, being an expert on grammar didn't even come up. And the writer is responsible for being the expert on her subject matter. If you know the subject well, that's wonderful, but if you don't, it's all right. You can usually still tell what kind of paper is appropriate, whether or not the arguments are well supported, if the organization is clear to you, and whether the audience is being addressed in an effective way.

Nevertheless, we need to mention that there are times that disciplinary expertise will be important. For example, a writing tutor who is a biology major will have much more knowledge of how to approach writing up scientific data than would someone who's never had to approach that task, and a business major will know more about the specifics of writing a business plan than would a theology major. In other words, depending on your major and your experience, you might have specific knowledge about the writing conventions of particular majors or disciplines. Now, this isn't to say that, as a tutor, you'll merely tell the writers, "No, the results of your experiments do not go in your methods section." Instead, you'll have even greater knowledge of the important questions to ask than would a more "general" tutor: "Why did you put your results in the methods section? How have other writers dealt with that placement in some of the research articles you've read?" Your goal is still to let writers control their own work, but your expertise in these matters can be quite valuable. Many writing centers have recognized this value and recruit tutors—often graduate students—from a wide variety of majors, encouraging writers to match up with someone in their discipline. But we also want to repeat a warning: As a

tutor, rather than an editor, your job isn't to offer content expertise and launch into a protracted lecture on the roots of the Russian Revolution. You need to respect writers' need to discover—with your help—the information they need to clarify a point or expand an argument.

### BREAKING THE ICE

Dawna commented in her tutor-training class one day that her first visit to the writing center a few months before had been a disappointment because of her expectations. She'd had a presentation in her literature class by a tutor and had been told about the role of the writing center but still believed that the writing center was a place where experts told you how to fix your paper. She felt that the tutor wasn't doing a good job because he expected her to do all the revising. She asked if there wasn't a good way to let writers know when they first arrive what will happen in the session. As a result, we've started asking writers, "Have you been here before?" If they have, then we can relax and get started. If not, after we ask some initial questions about the assignment and the stage of the project, we give writers a good idea of what will happen and possibly help them to avoid disappointment or frustration.

Writers can come to the writing center with either clear or vague ideas of what will happen, but many come with apprehensions and vulnerabilities. Some see it as a sign that they are not strong writers (it isn't, necessarily). Most are nervous. So taking a few minutes to get to know the writer is really important. Even if you only have a short time to work together, it's important to set a collegial, congenial, friendly tone during those crucial first minutes.

Here are some e-journal entries based on a question about making writers comfortable.

I think the two main reasons that students are so afraid to come to the WC is because they are afraid to show their work and also because they may not feel as smart as they really are. It boils down to a confidence issue, and I think it is part of the job as a tutor, to help them maintain their confidence.

—Kip

I think that students feel awkward enough having something as personal as their writing examined and shared with another. . . . It's important to establish a rapport with them that lets them know you're on their level, not this abstract pedestal of English superiority. As a tutor, I think it's important to develop skills that let you gauge and read a per-

son, get a feeling from them. A lot of times, you can just try to be warm and friendly, and humorous. That seems to ease most people. Some writers who are more shy may be scared off by that. In that case, I think it could help just to be more gentle, more reassuring.

—Maggie

In most of my observations, the tutors begin the session by asking the writer what they know about the Writing Center. This allows the tutor to explain why the writer is going to read the paper aloud, which seems to make the writer a bit more comfortable. I've also noticed that the MORE dialogue that takes place before the paper is read, the MORE comfortable the writer seems to feel. It is almost as though the writer needs to establish a "relationship" with you before just diving into the tutoring session.

—Stephanie N

The most effective session I have watched is one in which Katie had an ESL student. I could tell that he was very apprehensive about reading his paper because his English wasn't very good, and here he had two people to read it to. . . . To get the session going, she just asked him about what he was trying to say (it was a personal statement for an application) and then really listened to him tell the story in his own words and then we worked to put that more concisely than he had it.

—Liz K

### START WITH QUESTIONS

So, you're on your first shift in the writing center, you've broken the ice, and now you're ready to help that first eager writer, paper clutched in his hand. What do you do? Think about the way you might look over a friend's paper when you are in the role of editor. Chances are, you take the paper and probably go off with it, perhaps somewhere quiet, where you can concentrate.

As a tutor, you're going to do this process differently. We train our tutors to start by asking writers a few basic questions before they even consider the draft:

- What was the assignment?
- What is your central point or main argument? (We don't say "what is your thesis?" or the writer is likely to read us a sentence that won't help us much. When the writer sums the paper up and we write that down,

sometimes the summary is a better thesis than the one in the paper. We can then help the writer see that, so write down the paraphrase for later.)

- What concerns you, or what do you want me to pay careful attention to? (And we write this down, because we'll surely come back to it later and either reassure the writer or address the issue that's raised.)

After you write those answers down, you're ready to work with the writer on the draft.

## READING ALOUD

The next step is probably a major shift from what you're used to doing. We recommend that you ask the writer to read the paper aloud to you while you take notes. If you've never done this before, we know that this idea takes some getting used to. But think of the action of taking your friend's paper and going off with it or writing on it. You're in control. You're calling the shots. And the writer in a writing center is probably someone you don't know, someone who doesn't have your pizza to eat and doesn't have a TV handy. If you were to read silently, there would be an awkward moment as he waits for your diagnosis. That metaphor from medicine equating bad writing with sickness or disease comes too easily to mind for this to be a good thing, we think.

When the writer reads the paper, he accomplishes several things, in addition to keeping in control. As you listen, you make a mental note not to interrupt, except to ask him to repeat something you didn't catch, and you listen to the whole paper. Listening to the whole thing from start to finish and taking notes puts you in the role of the learner and the writer in the role of the expert. And our anecdotal evidence is pretty good that the reader is listening, too, to the way the draft is working. Sometimes he'll pause and make a mark in the margin. Sometimes he'll say, "Oh, that sounds bad," and you can say, "Put a checkmark next to it and we'll come back to it." But he's giving his draft a critical reading in ways that will help him revise.

You're taking notes, listening. As we've already pointed out, he's the expert, since it's his paper. We talked about the editor's making all the final decisions, but in a good tutorial, the tutor asks questions, and the writer decides what to do with a draft.

Not all writers benefit equally from the practice of reading aloud, however. Some ESL writers will have great difficulty reading aloud, though their speech will be fine. If writers feel hesitant, don't force the issue. Offer to read for them. TJ writes an e-journal entry that shows how this can work out:

In one session I observed of Paula tutoring, the writer said she really did not want to read the paper, so I read it for her. Throughout the session she became increasingly comfortable and open to discussion. At

the end of the discussion, when all the barriers had been knocked down, she confided that she had a learning disability that made reading hard for her. This was unnoticeable by her writing style, but I can only imagine how much more comfortable she must have been when someone else read for her so she would not have to expose herself before she really wanted to.

—TJ

## AN EXAMPLE OF OPENING A TUTORING SESSION

Because what we've described up to this point is so important, we include the following transcript as an example, and we recommend that you read it aloud, preferably with a partner taking the second speaking role. This excerpt comes from the beginning of a session and starts with the writer asking for general feedback on her paper, and then the tutor asks about what the writer is working on:

*Writer:* This is an analytical paper.

*Tutor:* Okay.

*Writer:* It's basically regarding a reading passage assigned in the class, and we're supposed to do a critique on that.

*Tutor:* Okay. And two things: First, what was the reading passage?

*Writer:* The reading passage was "The Tourist," by Jamaica Kincaid.

*Tutor:* Jamaica Kincaid, yeah, I know her, but I don't know that [piece]. Was it an entire essay or just a passage from an essay?

*Writer:* Actually it was a short essay.

*Tutor:* Mm, hmm. And when you say critique it, what is your conception of what that involves, what that task involves?

*Writer:* Well, I'm supposed to take a stand, whether I agree with her or I have a different opinion, and I guess I have a different opinion.

*Tutor:* Okay. So tell me two things, what was her position?

*Writer:* She doesn't like tourism . . . because she comes from a different country, I guess.

*Tutor:* Yeah.



*Writer:* And she doesn't like tourists going to her country because they exploit her country in such a way.

*Tutor:* Mm, hmm. That's her main reason?

*Writer:* Right.

*Tutor:* Because it constitutes exploitation? And does she give examples of the exploitation, what that might look like?

*Writer:* Well, in the paper I have some of her viewpoints but, and then basically she says that, at the very end she says that the natives, every native would like to travel, that's for sure, but most of the natives in this world are very poor and so they are not able to, they cannot afford to go to other countries, so they would envy you and the fact that you, as a tourist, come to their country, it makes them jealous more.

*Tutor:* Mm, hmm. So her audience is, the readers she has in mind, sounds like those who would be tourists?

*Writer:* Right.

*Tutor:* I'll tell you what, will you read it to me? Reading's a good way, you can tell me, in a sense, what I should listen for, what your concerns are with this draft. And reading it out loud is a good way for you to get a feel for how it's shaping up, what your language is like.

*Writer:* Okay.

Notice several things in this excerpt about what the tutor does. He doesn't just ask about what the assignment is (an "analytical paper," according to the writer), but he also probes further by asking questions. What did the writer have to read? (And notice that the tutor immediately acknowledges that he's not familiar with the reading passage, thus putting the writer into the position of teaching him the essay's content.) What is the writer's conception of an analytical paper? And once she describes that task ("I'm supposed to take a stand, whether I agree with her or have a different opinion"), he asks more questions to preview the paper itself: What is the author's position? What evidence does she present to support that position? Who seems to be the author's intended audience—whom is she trying to persuade?

These questions accomplish several things. They probe the writer's understanding of the assigned task and of the reading itself. They also introduce some of the elements of a critique essay: a summary of the author's main claim, a presentation of her evidence, and a sense of her intended audience. Once the writer gives this information, it provides the foundation for

what will happen once the writer reads the paper itself, a means of checking back on whether or not the writer has included these elements and is consistent with what she told her tutor, compared with what she wrote.

Notice, too, that the tutor asks the writer to read her work aloud, giving a short justification. Thus, in this passage the tutor establishes his responsibilities: to ask about the task and the context, to help the writer better understand the task, and to evaluate how well the writer fulfills her stated purpose. Overall, he's putting himself in the position of reader of her essay, making as visible as possible what he'll be expecting and listening for as she reads her essay aloud.

Now consider that the dialogue on the previous page took up only about two-and-a-half minutes! The first few minutes of a session are crucial to establish a rapport with the writer, set goals, and lay a foundation for what next occurs. The exchange that time was brief, but what occurred was certainly crucial to the success of the session as a whole.

Here's another way of thinking about the opening of a session. The series of activities we engage in offer the writer repeated opportunities for reflection about the paper and about ways of talking about the draft. Here is a handout we give to tutor trainees at Marquette. We make it clear we don't expect tutors to follow it as a blueprint, but it lays out the various opportunities for the writer to think analytically and critically about a draft they bring.

### The First Steps in a Conference Where the Writer Has a Draft

| <i>The Activity</i>  | <i>The Purpose/Intent</i>  |
|--|--|
| Greet the writer and <i>ask</i> what he is working on.                                 | Create a friendly relationship or break the ice  |
| Have the writer fill out a writing conference record (WCR—see the example on page 43). | <p>Collect information for our database with an eventual eye to communicating the information to others</p> <p>Find out the <i>due date</i> of the work</p> <p>Learn what the writer defines as the main issue or problem or challenge or goal</p> <p><i>Provide the writer with the opportunity to see how she describes writing tasks</i></p> <p><i>Provide the writer with an opportunity to reflect on her purpose</i></p> |

| <i>The Activity</i>  | <i>The Purpose/Intent</i>  |
|--|--|
| Look carefully at the WCR.   | Determine what, at first, seems to be the writer's goal<br><br>Create an agenda for the conference and prioritize based upon the writer's needs  |
| Ask: What is your main point or argument? If the writer begins to read the thesis, ask him to look away and paraphrase.<br><br>Write these words down, to refer to later.        | <i>Provide the writer with a chance to rethink what the argument is or should be</i><br><br><i>Show the writer that his ideas are important</i>  |
| Ask: Would you read your draft aloud? Tell the writer you will take notes on what she says and ask questions afterwards.   | <i>Provide the writer with an opportunity to revisit the draft, rethink it in the light of hearing it</i><br><br><i>Provide an attentive reader for the piece</i><br><br><i>Assure the writer that what you are writing down is not criticism, but notes and questions</i> |
| If the writer feels awkward about reading, offer to read for him. Ask him to note parts he wants to change.  | <i>Show the writer that reading aloud is an important revision strategy</i><br><br><i>Give the writer a chance to hear his writing in another voice</i>  |
| Before the writer reads, ask "What would you like me to listen for?"<br><br>After the writer reads, ask "Now that you've heard your paper, what do you want to do to revise it?" | <i>Give the writer a chance to rethink the categories she/he checked on the WCR</i><br><br><i>Provide an additional opportunity for the writer to self-assess</i>  |

The writer has now experienced incremental opportunities for self assessment.

## HIGHER-ORDER CONCERNS COME FIRST

Okay, you've started the session with questions, you've taken notes, and the writer has read her paper aloud. Now what do you do? One way to create the right atmosphere is for you first to comment on something you like in the paper (and this is a major contrast between the work of tutors and what editors do). We all want praise, and the writers with whom you'll work make themselves quite vulnerable by sharing their writing with you. However, don't push it. Writers will know if you're being phony and will feel patronized. But there's generally something good in every piece of writing. Find it. If words fail you, you can comment (if this is true), "Wow. You've really done a lot of work on this." Or "You've really done a good job of finding research sources," or "Great topic." But only say those things if they're true for you.

As we mentioned in talking about the writing process, one of the most important things you can do as a tutor is to deal first with what Thomas Reigstad and Donald MacAndrew call higher-order concerns. As a tutor, you'll save grammar and correctness for later (and, as we noted in Chapter 2, we'll call these matters later-order concerns). Higher-order concerns are the big issues in the paper, ones that aren't addressed by proofreading or editing for grammar and word choice. This isn't to say that proofreading isn't important for writers to learn, but we can tell you that, from our experience, if we help writers proofread first, a lot of writers—especially those who are inexperienced or hesitant—won't want to change anything in their papers, even to make things better, because they feel that once they have their sentences and punctuation right, all will be well with their writing (and perhaps you felt this way as well at some point in your writing history).

When dealing with higher-order concerns, you'll think about such questions as these.

- Is the writer really addressing the assignment and fulfilling its terms?
- Is there a need for a thesis, and if so, is there one?
- Do arguments have the support they need? Is there an organization I can relate to as a reader? Is this piece addressing an audience in an effective way?
- Does the piece show appropriate levels of critical thinking?

In the ideal world (where writing tutors would be out of a job!), we'd answer these questions with yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, and yes. But quite often the answer is no, and then we have a focus for our session.

Let's say the draft has some problems that the questions above will identify. As an editor, you would tell the writer what to do. You'd tell the



writer that she needs a thesis, and maybe you'd suggest one to her. You might even write one for her. But that's not necessarily what's best for the writer.

In his well-known essay "The Idea of a Writing Center," Stephen North says, "[I]n a writing center the object is to make sure that writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed. . . . [O]ur job is to produce better writers, not better writing" (438). As we pointed out, you're probably already a good editor and might have lots of good ideas for ways to improve the papers you'll be seeing, but it's better for the writer if she makes the decisions about the paper. Making decisions gives the writer a better sense of ownership of the paper and more pride in it when revisions go well. This emphasis on ownership will prompt us to ask questions not only about the paper in question, but about the writer's processes of composing:

- How many drafts has she written?
- What kind of revising has she done?
- Have any classmates or her teacher read any of the drafts and offered any advice?
- How does she feel about the advice?
- What are her revising strategies? (Does she have any?)

Some students who come to the writing center have never really revised a paper and have no idea how to go about rethinking a subject or even how to move paragraphs around. You need to find out how comfortable the writer is with these moves. Sometimes it's good to save the questions about revising for the end of the session when the writer has a better sense that she may need to make some sweeping changes.

If we see an organization that seems odd to us, we might ask the writer "What made you put this section on X right here between this section on A and this one on B?" When we ask such questions, we're showing the writer that we trust her decisions. Maybe there's a connection that we didn't see. If we didn't see it, and the writer explains it, we can ask if some sort of explanation or clarification belongs in the draft, or what's more likely, the writer will say, "Oh, I need to make that clear, don't I?"

There are lots of good questions we can keep handy for tutorials. One of the best ones was a suggestion of one of our tutors, Dan Giard. Dan always likes to ask, right after the writer has read the draft, "Now that you hear it again, what do you want to do with it next?" This keeps the writer in the role of expert (and after all, she's likely to have done plenty of research on her topic; if not, and if it's needed, you need to ask more questions about the content). Another good question starts with a thumbnail sketch of the organization of the essay as you heard it and as you took notes about it. Then, the question is simply, "Is this what you wanted me to get out of your paper?"

These questions show that we trust the writer and the writer's decisions. We're not trying to take over the writing process. We're trying to help the writer see what kinds of questions she should be asking of her own paper. If we model these questions for the writer, then it's our hope that next time, she will ask them herself.

## ANOTHER CONTRAST: CONVERSATION AND QUESTIONS

What does the ideal session, the totally textbook session look like? It would look like two peers having a *conversation* about writing, where each is equally likely to ask a question, move the conversation forward or point out his or her confusion as a reader. (We'll accept that these two peers are unequal in their expertise, but that's probably true in most conversations.) The tutor might be asking questions but not in the role of the teacher drawing the right answers out of the writer. Muriel Harris says of conferences with teachers, "When a student in a writing conference mistakenly thinks the teacher has the answers, all real thought ceases while the student begins searching or guessing for answers the teacher will accept" (62). We believe this is often the case with tutors as well. Nick Carbone sums this up well in a discussion on WCenter, a computer listserv for writing center directors and tutors:

Question-asking the wrong way can become a kind of inquisition. Very often tutors ask questions in the hopes of leading the writer to some "right" answer. . . . But some tutors are just really good at question placement in the context of conversation. So there are the get-to-know/ice-breaker/context questions . . . : about the assignment, dates due, purpose of the essay, and so on (and you don't always need to ask these up front, it can trickle in as needed). But the real trick is moving to a conversation about the writing, where as a tutor you can talk to the writer, be a good listener, hear the ideas, ask questions about those the way an interested friend will ask questions about some event you're telling them about. Part of that means talking with the writer about the idea, sharing opinions, disagreeing, agreeing, thinking of examples, the way people do when they get together and talk about things.

So what are the right and wrong ways of asking questions? Ask questions only if you really want to know the answer. This might mean letting go of an answer you may *think* you know and trusting the writer to know a good answer. You may ask, "Why did you choose to put this section here?" The writer is still going to hear this question as "This doesn't belong here." She may ask, "Should I move it?" You can then rephrase the question: "Is there

a good reason why it belongs here?" That allows her to assert that indeed she does but that maybe she needs to show the reader why.

There are all kinds of questions that work well and that don't have canned answers. Content-clarifying questions can be important: "What does this term mean?" "What is this paragraph's function?" Overall, avoid questions that put the writer in the position of trying to guess the answer that's in your head; those sorts of closed questions are usually not at all productive.

Sometimes, though, questions are not the best route. Let's imagine that you see a major weakness in a paper; for example, the paper is not fulfilling the requirements of the assignment. This is probably not a good time to ask a question. You might ask to see the assignment sheet again, and in a way this is a kind of question that indicates your concern. But there's no harm against saying, "I'm concerned about the way your paper addresses the assignment." This kind of statement puts you in a position of expert, but at the same time shows the writer honest respect. There might be all kinds of leading questions that might get the writer to see this problem himself, but those kinds of questions would be somewhat transparent or might seem manipulative and might erode the trust you build with the writer when you withhold expert knowledge. Instead, you and the writer could get right to work on that most pressing problem. Then new questions will move the session forward.

### WHAT IF THERE'S NO ESSAY?

If you've had any experience with a writing center (maybe you've visited yours as a writer already), you know that not all sessions start with a draft of a paper. Writing center directors do a lot of public relations trying to let writers know that the earlier in the process they come in, the better they are helped. You probably know from your own experience how helpful it is to talk over your assignments with your friends, classmates, or instructors before you ever do any writing. And once you start writing, you know how your ideas can take shape if you just take time to talk them over again. This is another kind of help we offer as tutors and that contrasts with the work of editors.

A good way to begin such a session as this is to have the writer paraphrase the assignment for you. This will give you a good sense of how well he knows what's expected of him. If he's stumbling around and pulls on an assignment sheet, that could mean he's having a hard time just understanding what's expected. You can help here, looking over the sheet with him, asking questions about the assignment, and encouraging him to clarify any ambiguous points with his instructor.

You know from your own experience that you'll write the best papers on topics you care about, so it's good to help the writer identify parts of the assignment that are meaningful or that draw from his life experiences in some way or that touch on subjects he may be interested in as he plans his career. Sometimes writers find topics that simply fascinate them, and they will write well about them, because they want to know more and because they want to share what they know.

Sometimes writers come to us with a lack of trust in their own perceptions of things. Many schools begin with an assignment that asks them to relate their experiences, giving such directions as "Write about a time when writing went really well for you" or "Describe an experience that changed you." Inexperienced writers can be very uncomfortable with those assignments, because many of them have been taught "Never use first person," or "Never give your opinion. Just the facts." They have to unlearn these rules, and talking about the assignment can help them warm up to these writing tasks. The research paper will come soon enough in most schools.

As we pointed out in Chapter 2, there are many ways that you can help writers generate material or figure out what it is they want to say. We like to help writers get their first thoughts and preconceptions out of the way by writing them down. (Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff call this Loop Writing.<sup>1</sup>) Now you can point your questions toward refinements of those first thoughts. Lots of beginning writers will go with those first thoughts and use them for a paper topic; however, for most college assignments, this won't be good enough. They will probably be common knowledge, certain to put the instructor to sleep. As a tutor, you can ask the writer what interests him most about those ideas he's generated already. What would he like to know more about? Does he know how to find good research sources? Or does the assignment call for him to write about his own experiences?

### HELPING WITH LATER-ORDER CONCERNS

Imagine that all those higher-order concerns are fine in a writer's draft, but there are some errors. Or imagine that you've already spent a session or two on the higher-order concerns and can now address later-order concerns. How do you know there are errors if you've only listened to the writer read the paper? Chances are that you don't, unless you heard some awkward

<sup>1</sup>They then have writers develop either moments, stories, or portraits, then generate some dialogue, then they have them vary their audience or chronology; and then they have them think of lies, errors, or sayings about the topic. Some of these techniques will be more valuable than others, depending on the assignment.

sentences (the ones that just didn't make sense to you) and unless you heard the writer misuse some words. To address later-order concerns, you have to *see* the paper. We suggest that you sit next to the writer for this process, and *you're* going to reread the essay, perhaps now reading one sentence or paragraph at a time. Once again, we're going to trust the writer. Maybe this time you'll read the paper aloud as you both look it over, but instead of going all the way through it, you'll stop when you spot an error or think you do. In your editor role, you'd have corrected the error. But tutors have better ways of helping students, ways that make them better writers.

Many sentence-level problems are not the result of a writer's carelessness or lack of understanding about correctness. All of us will often write confusing sentences when we're trying to convey ideas that are particularly complex or only partially formed in our minds, or when we're writing in ways that we're really not familiar with (as in writers who tell us, "I've never written a critique essay and have no idea how to approach it"). Few writers get it right the first time, but many have the capability to correct their sentence-level problems with your help; rather than acting as an editor, you'll be teaching writers techniques so they can become good editors. An example of this technique is to say, "There's a sentence in the middle, in that paragraph about . . . that confuses me. Could you paraphrase it for me?" Write down what the writer says. Chances are that the paraphrase will be clear, because there's a clear context for it and a specific audience (you) that makes it easier for the writer. Then you can give feedback: "I really understood what you just said." Show the writer what you wrote down—and be sure not to correct or to add your own words to it, but keep it in the writer's own words. You might ask about the writing process at this stage and see if the writer can reflect a bit on what was going on during the composition of the unclear sentence. Sometimes she will be able to see what she needs to do to make things clearer.

For a writer whose entire paper was full of unclear sentences, we've tape-recorded the entire tutoring session. She'd read a sentence, paraphrase it, and move on quickly, and we then loaned her the tape. Writers are very grateful for that kind of help.

## ERROR ANALYSIS

We often find that new tutors are most terrified by the idea of a writer's paper that is just full of errors. Where do you start? Well, as we've emphasized, you start with higher-order concerns, but there will come a time when you'll need to help writers work to correct those repeated errors and become better editors of their own work. Composition researchers such as Mina Shaughnessy and David Bartholomae have given

us a great deal of insight into the study of errors that writers make. Most important, you need to view errors not as manifestations of carelessness or sloth or stupidity but instead as stages in any writer's development. So what does this mean for you as a tutor? Well, trying to understand the logic behind a writer's errors is perhaps the most important help you can offer. While editors wield red pens and circle errors like stains on the page, tutors try to get at the reasons why writers made the choices they did. This process isn't particularly different from the way you addressed higher-order concerns. You asked what the writer already knew about the sort of essay she had to write or you asked about why she ordered the paragraphs in the manner she did or chose particular details, and then you tried to build upon that prior knowledge. With error analysis, you'll take the same approach to comma use or subject-verb agreement or sentence boundaries. Your most powerful question for the writer is, "Why did you make that choice?"

One other important strategy in error analysis is to look for patterns. As you read through the essay, perhaps a paragraph at a time, you can look for certain types of errors that the writer makes repeatedly. A common example is a comma splice or two independent clauses joined with only a comma (and we've also found that writers are often quite aware of the types of errors they make since they've been told repeatedly that they have that problem but often aren't shown how to correct it). Imagine that you are reading the paragraph and see several instances of comma splices. Your best bet is to ask the writer, "Why did you put this comma here?" While this is sort of a leading question (and most writers will reply, "Is that wrong?"), many will explain a logic behind the comma placement, perhaps that they felt that the clauses on each side of the comma were short or closely related or that they heard a pause at that spot and thought the rule with commas was to put one wherever they paused in their writing. Sometimes a writer will have memorized rules that are wrong.

At that point, you would tell him that it's an error, let's say, to put a comma alone between independent clauses. You may need to explain the idea of the independent clause to him, perhaps looking the concept up in the handbook that your writing center most commonly uses. Referring to the handbook is a good idea if you know something is wrong but don't have the answer at your fingertips, and it also models a behavior we want writers to imitate: to go for the handbook and look up the rule.

In more step-by-step form, error analysis looks like the following:

1. You see an error. First, you want to know if the writer spots it and can correct it. So you ask, "Do you see an error in this sentence?" Chances are that the writer will find and correct it without any problem. But let's say that the writer doesn't see it. Then we get to the next step.

2. Talk about the general class of errors, saying, "The problem is with your verb," or "There's a punctuation error." Give the writer time to spot it, and if he still doesn't see it, it is time for the next step.

3. Point out the error to him. "The problem is with this comma." Ask about the writer's logic behind making the error. See if he knows how to fix it. If not, ask him what rule he used to decide to put a comma where he did. As we noted above, writers often misinterpret or misapply rules. If the writer still hasn't made the correction, proceed to the next step.

4. Explain the specific rule (and refer to the handbook, as we pointed out), and have the writer apply it to his error. Help him make the fix if you need to, but explain as thoroughly as you can why you're making the choices that you made.

5. Go on to the next example of this error, but try to have the writer apply what you've taught in the previous example. And then treat each error in this fashion. For many writers, you'll soon not need even to point out the problem—they will recognize and fix the error on their own.

As you can see, error analysis can be a slow process and completely different from telling the writer what to do (as an editor would). As an effective tutor, you're having the writer do as much of the work as possible and teaching the writer the ways to correct errors. If you've noted patterns of errors, we advise you not to deal with more than three different types in a single tutoring session. That's all you'll have time and energy for, and it's all most writers can learn to correct in one session.

Another important role you can play in error analysis is not to focus just on errors but to find and point out instances where the writer has made correct choices. For instance, in the case of a writer who has a few comma splices, like the one we described previously, you then see that there is a sentence where he has punctuated two independent clauses correctly. Point it out to him. It's a process of giving positive reinforcement, not just of finding errors, and you want to maintain the good rapport you have established with the writer, not come across as a representative of the grammar police.

## ENDING THE SESSION

A good session will fly by, so you'll have to be aware of time. If there's no clock where you tutor, have a watch handy. It's often a good idea to offer the writer something such as, "We have ten minutes left; do you still want to talk about the five pages we haven't looked at or is there another priority we should address?" When the time is almost up, it's a good idea to get a sense of what the writer got out of the session. "What do you plan to do

| Writing Conference Record   |  |                   |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Phone Number: _____   | College: _____                               | Student ID: _____ |
| Year in School (Circle) HS 1 2 3 4 5 G Other    Is English your first language? Y N |  |                   |
| E-mail: _____   |  |                   |
| Date: _____ Name: _____   |  |                   |
| First visit this year? Y N    Circle: fall/Spring                                   |  |                   |
| Course (e.g. Engl 001): _____ Due Date? _____                                       |  |                   |
| Instructor: _____   |  |                   |
| What are you working on?  |  |                   |
| _____   |  |                   |
| _____   |  |                   |
| _____   |  |                   |
| What do you want to work on in this session? (check all that apply)                 |  |                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | Discuss an assignment                        |                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | Choose a topic                               |                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | Get feedback on a draft                      |                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | Check for development/support                |                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | Check for organization/coherence/transitions |                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | Check research/citations                     |                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  | Other:                                       |                   |
| What are your plans for revision?   |  |                   |
| _____   |  |                   |
| _____   |  |                   |
| _____   |  |                   |
| Tutor's name: _____   |  |                   |
| Tutor's comments: _____   |  |                   |
| _____   |  |                   |
| _____   |  |                   |

next?" is a good question to ask. As the writer tells you, you can encourage him to write those plans down. If a lot more remains to be done, you'll want to schedule another appointment, or maybe even two, if your center allows that. Schedule those appointments with you if at all possible, because you know the assignment, you know the writer's revision plans (and you'll keep a record of that), and you'll be able to jump right into the session



without a lot of explanations. You're also building a relationship with the writer, and you want him to feel comfortable about coming back to you with this or other writing projects.

### AFTER THE SESSION

Most writing centers ask you to write down some notes on the session you've just completed. Sometimes this is a note for instructors, and sometimes it's just a memo for the next tutor this writer may work with ("We worked on a paper on jet lag. We looked at his organization and he clarified for me how he meant it to be set up. He'll reorganize it, get more research, and come back on Wednesday"). Always be aware of your audience with these notes. If the writer has any access to them, be sure there are no notes you'd be embarrassed to have him see. You'll have to be sure you leave time to do this between sessions, because believe it or not, after three sessions with writers, you're likely to have forgotten a lot about the first two.

### WRITING CENTER ETHICS

To sum up this chapter, we want to point out that while its content comes from our own experiences as writers, tutors, and writing center directors, it also comes from our ethics of tutoring. We don't use the word *ethics* lightly. Ethics are usually associated with values and morals, a sense of right and wrong, a framework for behavior. In tutoring writing, ethics are synonymous with responsible conduct. For instance, as a tutor you're responsible to yourself, to the writers with whom you work, to your tutor colleagues, to your writing center director or equivalent, to your writing center itself, to your school, and even to the writing center field. Your conduct in any single session can have an impact on these various interested parties. For instance, showing up late to your tutoring shift can affect your own standing in the eyes of your director and of the writer signed up to meet with you, your colleagues' opinion of you, and your writing center's reputation. As a tutor, your responsible conduct has a ripple effect, demonstrating to all parties with a stake in the matter that the work you do is meaningful.

Your responsible conduct also has larger meaning, particularly in the contrast between tutors and editors. When we remind you that writers should own their texts or that tutors shouldn't simply clean up writers' texts and then hand them back as if they were dry cleaners, we show certain values and responsibilities that imbue writing center work. Your work as a tutor will require an ethical code, a conscious system of behavior

for that is reasoned, thoughtful, and responsible. And this code includes not only local responsibilities (for instance, treating all writers and colleagues with respect, fulfilling your job's duties, not using the writing center as a dating service!), but responsibilities that you now bear as a member of the writing center field. After all, we want our work to be taken seriously by those outside of our field. Responsible conduct—and continual discussion and examination of those responsibilities—is essential to this goal.

### EDITORS VERSUS TUTORS—A SUMMARY

What we've described about the tutoring process is very different from what went on in the TV lounge of your residence hall as those friendly neighborhood editors went about their business. We'll end by summarizing the contrast between tutors and editors:

| <i>Editors</i>                    | <i>Tutors</i>  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Focus on the text                 | Focus on the writer's development and establish rapport                      |
| Take ownership of the text        | Make sure the writer takes ownership   |
| Proofread                         | Start with higher-order concerns and worry about correctness last            |
| Give advice                       | Ask questions  |
| Read silently                     | Ask the writer to read aloud   |
| Look mainly for things to improve | Comment on things that are working well                                      |
| Work with an ideal text           | Trust the writer's idea of a text  |
| Make corrections on the page      | Keep hands off and let writers make corrections; help them learn correctness |
| Tell writers what to do           | Ask them their plans for revision  |



# What Being A Writing Peer Tutor Can Do for You

by Kenneth A. Bruffee

Keynote Address, 25th Annual National Conference  
on Peer Tutoring in Writing.

Pennsylvania State University, University Park, October 19-21, 2007.

Good morning. It is a great pleasure to be invited to speak to you today. I want to talk about something you have probably already given some thought to. It's what you yourself, personally, get out of being a writing peer tutor and can take away with you when you graduate from college. What I have to say has four parts.

The first part is that what you learn as a writing peer tutor can be as important to your college education as your class work and your extra-curricular activities. You learn things as a writing peer tutor that you can use when you go to graduate school or medical school or law school, when you get a job, and when you become just plain old garden variety citizens along with the rest of us. As a writing peer tutor, you learn things that can serve your own future and maybe serve your families, your towns, your nation, and maybe even, sometime down the road, your world.

To start with I want to make sure you and I are on the same page about what's really good about being a writing peer tutor. I think peer tutoring writing is a great thing to do because the educational enterprise you are engaged in as a writing peer tutor is both valuable *and* important. It's valuable and important, because it involves collaborative learning and several other kinds of human interdependence. That is, being a writing peer tutor is related to all kinds of productive relationships among human beings. Your tutees learn from you, you learn from your tutees, you learn from the writing peer tutors you work with, and they learn from you.

There is of course a difference between being valuable and being important. Something is valuable if it's useful, reliable, and worth the price. Writing peer tutors are useful, obviously, because so many college students have trouble learning to write well, and you help them do that. People know you're reliable, because you are

## About the Author

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nice people whom they can depend on to help them. And writing peer tutors are worth the price. You never get used up. You keep regenerating yourselves. That's how peer tutoring works.

Here's what I mean: Peer tutoring is a kind of craft. When you begin, an experienced writing peer tutor shows you how to go about it, keeps an eye on you, and answers your questions. Eventually, you learn by practicing the craft yourself. As an experienced writing peer tutor, you learn even more by handing on the skills of the craft to others, helping them learn how to go about it. Someday they will hand on the craft to still others, and so it goes. It's gone on that way already for 25 years and more. Writing peer tutors serve in many ways as self-regenerating organs of college education.

That's not the only reason writing peer tutors are worth the price. For any college or university, a peer tutoring program in writing is a first-rate investment. Set one up today, and the odds are good that it will still be going strong 25 years from now. The market in writing peer tutors doesn't fluctuate much. Helping undergraduate students learn to write well is as important to a college as green grass on the quadrangle, and it usually costs a lot less to maintain.

Second, although peer tutoring in writing is valuable, it is a lot more than valuable. To peer tutor writing is important. Something is important because it stands out, is significant, and is influential. Writing peer tutors certainly stand out. We're all here today, because so many colleges everywhere have peer tutoring programs in writing. And your work is certainly significant because so many students feel that the help of writing peer tutors is priceless. Once in a while one of them tells you that. It makes your day, doesn't it?

But *are* writing peer tutors *influential*? You sure are. Peer tutoring writing has influenced American college education for—what is it?—more than 25 years. As a writing peer tutor, you influence how your tutees go about their studies, and you influence how they feel about themselves. And believe it or not, writing peer tutors have even influenced the way some teachers teach writing. But the greatest importance of being a writing peer tutor is that being a writing peer tutor influences *you*.

Being a writing peer tutor influences you because peer tutoring writing is a helping, care-taking engagement. It broadens your understanding of your own and your fellow students' value and the importance of both of you as human beings. Sitting down with a tutee is not just going to work. It's a gesture. Gestures say things just as words do. When you begin as a peer tutor, it may not occur to you right away that what you *do* says something, just as what you *say* says something. But as the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing's Peer Tutor Alumni Research

Project has shown, when you've been at peer tutoring for a while and the job is not so new to you as it was, your self-confidence increases. You relax a bit, you have time to think about what you are doing as a writing peer tutor. As a result, being a writing peer tutor becomes more meaningful to you.

Here's some samples of what you might be thinking. I've borrowed them from the work of a professor at another Pennsylvania college down the pike, Goucher. Her name is Barbara Roswell. A few years ago, Barbara did an ethnological study of what writing peer tutors do. Ethnology is the study of how groups of people, such as us here, develop socially and culturally. Barbara listened to peer tutors, watched them work, interviewed them, read their journals, read what tutees wrote, and read loads of student writing done in courses throughout the college. Her study led to many insights into the craft of writing peer tutors: what you do, how you do it, and why. Here are two of her insights that I thought might interest you.

One thing you do as a writing peer tutor is help students understand what professors are asking them to do. Often that's writing a position paper, the familiar, conventional say-something-and-then-explain-and-defend-it routine. You help your tutees to write in one of the ways that you have already learned to write. Granted, that may not be everyone's favorite part of the job, but it's a very important part. The rationale for teaching that kind of conventional writing is of course survival. Doing well in college and graduate school (and getting a good job and keeping it after graduation) often requires the ability to write papers, briefs, and memos.

Another of Barbara's insights is that spending a lot of time talking with tutees about writing is just as important a part of a writing peer tutor's job as helping tutees plan their position papers. You and your tutees talk together, just as you and your fellow writing peer tutors talk together, about all kinds of things about writing. You talk about everyday stuff—like what somebody likes and hates about writing, the hour of the day (or probably night) when people like to write, and the kinds of places somebody likes to be in when they write. And then, sometimes, you get to the root of things. You talk about what people want to be able to write, what somebody likes best to write, what they want most to achieve when they write, and how they hope to go about achieving it. In those kinds of conversations, you, your peer-tutoring peers, and your tutees learn a lot.

Third, when you talk with your tutees about all those kinds of things, what your tutees learn increases the value and importance of peer tutoring writing by compounding social and intellectual engagement. In most cases, that comes as something quite new to them. You are telling them that *writing is a personally engaging*

*social activity*. You're saying that we never write alone. Writing opens doors into worlds of conversation with other writers, with readers, and with yourself. Writing is a form of civil exchange that thoughtful people engage in when they try to live reasonable lives with one another. Writing is a way of caring about people, and sometimes it's a way of caring for people, too. We may write to and about people who are nearby or people far away, or even people who are no longer living.

That is the most important lesson you learn by being a writing peer tutor: that writing is a personally engaging social activity. What you are learning as a writing peer tutor is part of the craft and essential characteristics of human interdependence. "Interdependence" is an unusual word. *Interdependence* directly contradicts its opposites, which are *dependence* and *independence*. *Dependence* and *independence* divide people. *Interdependence* draws people together. *Interdependence* denotes people's inevitable and necessary dependence on one another. Sometimes, under some conditions, every one of us will have to count on somebody else. And everyone expects that sometimes, under some conditions, somebody else will be counting on us.

Among people who recognize each other and share familiar kinds of social background and beliefs, it is obvious that they have to be there for each other. But being there for other people is not so obvious among people who don't recognize each other and who see each other as strangers. Regionally, nationally, and globally, survival of *everyone* depends on acknowledging the necessity of human interdependence, understanding its characteristics, complexities, and satisfactions, and becoming adept in its craft.

That's where being a writing peer tutor comes in. Your conversations with tutees, introducing them to writing as a personally engaging social activity, also introduce them to the inevitability and necessity of human interdependence. So, when you talk with tutees about writing, you hand on to them some of the craft of human interdependence that you gain as a writing peer tutor.

That is my final point. That wonderful gesture, handing on to your college peers something as valuable and important as the craft of human interdependence, is what you get most out of being a writing peer tutor and take away with you when you graduate from college. It's the bottom line. Well, it's not quite the whole bottom line. There is one more chapter to the story, one I suspect you have thought about, and if you haven't, I'll bet someone in your family has thought about it.

Here's the story. In 1990, about twenty-five years ago, just about the time that Ron Maxwell and his colleagues were organizing this conference for the first time, a professor at Harvard, Richard Light, surveyed liberal arts alumni throughout the

United States. He asked them how they thought colleges could improve the quality of undergraduate education. Their reply was that “the best thing colleges could do for students in coming years would be to train them how to engage in group efforts productively.”

Then, ten years later, about the time some of you were entering high school, a computer scientist at the Xerox research program in Palo Alto, John Seely Brown, and a cultural historian at Berkeley, Paul Duguid, published a book that confirmed Light’s results. Their book is called *The Social Life of Information*. It refutes the commonplace understanding that computers increase efficiency and productivity. Brown and Duguid say it’s not so. They show that the most efficient and productive people are not the rugged individualists taking on the future heroically alone. The people whose work is most efficient and productive are those who “know each other and work together directly [in] face-to-face communities that continually negotiate with, communicate with, and coordinate with each other.”

What Light, Brown, and Duguid together tell us, furthermore, is confirmed, as so much else is these days, by statistics. Somebody in your family—and maybe even you yourself—will surely find it gratifying to learn that in 2006, a survey called *Are They Really Ready to Work?* listed skills that employers look for in the college graduates they interview. The first skill on the list is something you are pretty familiar with as writing peer tutors: “communication,” meaning, of course, reading and writing—always first on almost everyone’s list. Of the twenty skills that employers look for, ranked second after “communication” is “teamwork and collaboration.” What employers in business, industry, education, medicine, law, communication—you name it—are looking for are the ability to write well and the ability to work well with others. The Peer Tutor Alumni Research Project confirms it, too. Responses received from people like you, who were writing peer tutors themselves five, ten, twenty years ago, say decisively that what you gain as a writing peer tutor prepares you to enter the working world successfully no matter what occupation or profession you undertake.

That is why my thesis today has been that thoughtful young people like yourselves who are looking ahead to your future have a lot to get out of being writing peer tutors. You can learn things that serve you personally and professionally and that give you a background that will help you serve your families, your hometowns, your nation, and, sometime maybe, *our* world.

I am confident that, in your own way, you will do just that.



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## THE WRITING PROCESS

You're considering becoming a writing tutor or are already tutoring because you've had some success as a writer yourself. That's no small feat. Writing is one of the most difficult—and most rewarding—things anyone can do. And perhaps your motive for tutoring is to pass on to others what you know how to do well. For someone who likes to write, the opportunity to talk with others about writing and then get paid for it (or receive course credit) is quite a good deal. You'll find many others like you in the writing center field who love talking about language, writing, and helping others use language in important ways.

Keep in mind that talking about writing is perhaps the most important thing you will do as a tutor, and contrast that talk with what's often seen as teaching. Teaching any subject is sometimes narrowly perceived to be the passing on of knowledge from an expert to a novice. You can probably remember many schooling experiences that consisted of teachers (and textbooks) holding those "right" answers and waiting for you to guess what was in their heads and pages—answering you with their subsequent approval or dismissal of your answer. Critics such as Paolo Freire refer to this method as the "banking model" of education in which information is held like a valuable commodity by the teacher, passed to students through lectures and textbooks, and then redeposited by students on multiple-choice and short-answer exams.

So what does this have to do with the writing process and tutoring? Well, writing is unique in how it functions. It fundamentally changes our relationship to whatever we are learning. Consider that the act of writing itself is often a process of discovery or of making meaning or, quite simply, of

learning. The answers aren't predetermined by the teacher (at least not a good teacher) and cannot be corrected by running your paper through a computer program. The concept of writing as a means of learning is fundamental to the writing process—and to writing centers. Thus, it is important that you be reflective about your own writing process and understand the role of the tutor in writers' processes. These are some of the issues we'll address in this chapter.

## WRITERS AND THE WRITING PROCESS

A bit of history: In the teaching of writing early in this century, students frequently wrote what were called *themes*. The instructor wrote a topic on the blackboard and students dutifully went to work, crafting as carefully as they could an essay in response. These themes were collected, corrected (in red pen, of course), and returned. The expectation was that students would learn from daily practice and from the corrections their instructor made. Did students learn to write well from these methods? Perhaps some did, but not enough; this led the popular and academic press at the time to declare a crisis in students' communicative skills. As C. S. Duncan of Ohio State University wrote in 1914, "There is a spirit of unrest, a feeling of dissatisfaction in educational circles over the poor work done by students in English composition" (154). Blame was placed on teachers, families, and, most strongly, on the students themselves (particularly since such crises often coincide with increasing numbers of nonmainstream students coming to higher education). One solution at the time was to reconceive the teaching of writing as a laboratory course, akin to the scientific laboratory. Just as chemistry students conducted experiments in order to learn and apply the principles of chemistry, writing students would write in conditions that emphasized practice, guidance, and feedback (whether from peers or their teachers). Of course, much of this practice was in the service of having students make fewer mechanical errors (as early as 1895, John Franklin Genung of Amherst College described composition at his institution as "a veritable workshop, wherein, by systemized daily drill, details are mastered one by one" [174]), but the idea began to take hold that writing was an act that required practice and feedback, not simply the display of information in predetermined forms.

Fast-forward fifty years or so (oftentimes ideas take hold slowly in higher education). By the 1970s, the idea of writing as a process took on a renewed importance as teachers and writers such as Peter Elbow, Janet Emig, Ken Macrorie, and Donald Murray became influential. In a time when the function of schooling was called into question (along with a host of other societal institutions), writing was rediscovered in a way, particularly as a way of making sense of one's experience and as a way of control-

ling one's own learning (or for "writing without teachers," as Peter Elbow told us in his influential book of the same name). Also around this time, educational psychology influenced the teaching of writing, as researchers began to study the cognitive processes involved when one writes. Rather than just examining the habits of novelists and successful professional writers, researchers such as Janet Emig, Nancy Sommers, James Britton, Linda Flower, and John Hayes studied the ways that *students* wrote and described writing as a "recursive" act.<sup>1</sup> An additional strand was to reintroduce ideas from classical rhetoric and to look at the act of writing in terms of its rhetorical components, particularly the relationship between purpose, audience, and content. The confluence of these various movements turned into what Maxine Hairston has called "a paradigm shift," a virtual revolution in the way writing was conceived of and taught (albeit a revolution that was fermenting for 70 years or so!).

So what does this all mean for you as a writer and tutor? No doubt, in high school and college English classes, you've been exposed to notions of stages or steps in the writing process, whether called prewriting/writing/rewriting, or gathering/drafting/revising (or a host of other labels and stages). Most important, we believe writing is a process, not a one-shot deal in a theme book, and we understand that a goal for any writer is to control his or her own process and to develop flexibility for approaching any writing task. These two notions—control and flexibility—seem to be opposites but are, in fact, important contrasts, as we described in Chapter 1, and in a bit we will expand on each. Further, writing is now recognized as a social act: it isn't learned merely through drill-and-practice (which James Berlin calls the "current-traditional" approach to teaching writing); writing isn't completed in isolation by individual geniuses or used mainly to discover personal insight (the expressivist theory of writing); instead, writing and learning to write require us to interact with others (often called the social-epistemic or social constructivist theory of writing). As writing center theorist Andrea Lunsford writes, we need to view "knowledge and reality as mediated by or constructed through language in social use, as socially constructed, contextualized, as, in short, the product of *collaboration*" (4). Writing centers, therefore, are key components in this social view, as tutors

<sup>1</sup>Sandra Perle describes recursiveness: "Throughout the process of writing, writers return to subroutines of the overall process, or subroutines (short successions of stops that yield results on which the writer draws in taking the next set of steps); writers use these to keep the process moving forward. In other words, recursiveness implies that there is a forward-moving action that exists by virtue of a backward-moving action." She says that writers might reread little bits of their writing, might return to a key word or topic, or might further pause and "look to their felt experience and [wait] for an image, a word, a phrase to emerge that captures the sense they embody." "Understanding Composing," *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. ed. Gary Tate, Edward P. J. Corbett, Nancy Myers, 150–51.

and writers engage in one of the most powerful means of helping writers find and share meaning—collaborative talk.

Given that background, we now need to lay out some essentials of the writing process, ones that will probably seem quite familiar.

## A Model of the Writing Process

For several reasons, we want to provide you with a model of the writing process. As a writer, you can consider this model in light of how to approach any writing task. As a tutor, you can help writers by intervening in their writing processes, providing specific strategies, or helping them to refine the strategies they already use.

However, several caveats are needed. First, models aren't intended to mirror reality. Instead, models are devices that begin to help us sketch a phenomenon, trace its rough edges, or simply begin to ask important questions. Second, the model we'll describe is quite general—and a weakness of many models is that their generality obscures the importance of individual differences. That leads to our third caveat, one that's particularly important for the tutoring of writing: The writing process is an extremely idiosyncratic act. What works for you won't necessarily work for your closest friend or for a writer you're working with. The goal in applying our model is to develop control and flexibility—those two contrasting notions we mentioned previously. Finally, in the model, we'll describe a variety of strategies that you can both use as a writer and recommend as a tutor; however, in no way have we been exhaustive in our list of strategies. We do recommend that you find out more by consulting your writing center's handouts or the many complete texts on various writing strategies.

Our model of the writing process is based on the kinds of questions writers ask themselves at various points in the completion of any writing task and the strategies they might use to investigate those questions. We use three episodes in the writing process—planning, drafting, and revising—plus a fourth episode, proofreading/editing, more for simplicity's sake than anything else, but it's important to keep in mind the nonlinear shape of the writing process (one that's quite hard to render on paper). In other words, rather than steps or stages that one goes through one at a time, we conceive of the writing process as cyclical (or perhaps a vortex that sucks up all of your free time?!). You will often revisit the questions you first pose and the strategies you use to pursue them. Additionally, many things can influence the relative importance you attach to the various stages. For instance, writing a shopping list will require far less revising than writing a letter to the editor. And writing an essay analyzing an assigned reading you're not sure you even liked will take far more planning than a letter to a friend. Overall, we need to stress that context is everything. But first, let's finally describe

the model. As you read this description, think about how closely it aligns to the process you use for school-based tasks:

### Episode 1: Planning

Questions you might ask:

- What do I know about my topic?
- What is my purpose for writing?
- Who are my intended readers, and how much do they know about my topic?
- How is this task like others I have had before?
- What structure will work best for my topic?

Strategies you might use to investigate these questions (not an exhaustive list!):

- **Clustering:** a visual representation of your thoughts on the topic, usually starting with a single word that invokes word associations, which you write around that first word, drawing a circle around each association and continually building until you've drawn a "cluster" of words (as conceived by Gabriel Rico).
- **Freewriting:** quick and exhaustive writing on the topic, often with a timed goal ("I'll write for five minutes without stopping") and, as Peter Elbow tells us, likely to turn off your overwrought editor and tap into the generating portions of your brain.
- **Conversation,** either in class or with friends.
- **Brainstorming:** unstructured exploration of your ideas.
- **Reading and research** on your topic.

Overall, in this episode you're *trying* to answer the planning questions, not necessarily finding answers, and using the strategies that you feel will work best for your topic and task. Consider that a grocery list might come with a quick brainstorm or a conversation with a roommate or spouse, but an essay on the factors that contribute to the destruction of the Amazon rainforest might require far more careful, extensive, and multistrategied planning.

### Episode 2: Drafting

Questions you might ask:

- What do I know about my topic?
- What is my purpose for writing?
- Who are my intended readers, and how much do they know about my topic?
- How is this task like others I have had before?
- What structure will work best for my topic?



Yes, we know, the questions are the same as for the first episode. That's our way of saying that, throughout your writing, you are working toward answering these questions. That is also why you might reuse the strategies we described earlier. However, we feel there is one component in drafting that might not be as fully formed during planning—your *intention* or the feeling you get when you are trying to render on paper an idea or image or argument. You have an intention, usually quite out of focus in the early stages. Composition researchers Lil Brannon and Cy Knoblauch call this intention the “ideal text,” as if you have a finished copy of your essay locked somewhere in your mind, and the point of this early writing is to find which strategy is the key to free that ideal text so that your rough drafts (your real text) will closely match the ideal. Brannon and Knoblauch are suspicious about this idea, particularly because ideal texts are often presented as absolutes by teachers or authority figures, with little room for students to challenge those ideas. We prefer to imagine that your intention as a writer and just how you'll go about putting that intention into words aren't necessarily complete in your mind. Instead, you need to use writing and language to bring a shape to your intentions. This is perhaps why it just feels so darn good to get something right, to find the words to express your meaning. Thus, in the drafting episode of the composing process, you're doing some writing, perhaps lots of it, as you attempt to render your intentions on the page (or computer screen).

Strategies you might use when drafting:

- Any or all of those you used for planning.
- Outlining: Creating an outline can be particularly useful if you feel a strong loss of control—you have lots and lots to say, but need to figure out how you will present that material. However, outlines need to be flexible, not individual cages out of which your writing can never escape.
- Visual representations of your topic: We mentioned clustering as a planning strategy, but it's worth repeating here that if you have a strong sense of what you want to say, but not a clear sense of how all of those ideas will fit together, visually representing your work can be powerful. Sketch pads, black- or whiteboards, floors filled with arranged piles of readings or notecards—anything that enables you to think visually can work here.

### Episode 3: Revising

Questions you might ask:

- What do I know about my topic?
- What is my purpose for writing?
- Who are my intended readers, and how much do they know about my topic?

- How is this task like others I have had before?
- What structure will work best for my topic?

Yes, at the risk of badgering, we know that we've repeated the questions again, but we want to emphasize the recursive nature of the writing process. By this episode, you have perhaps become satisfied with some of your answers to these questions. However, some might still remain unexplored. Revising is a vital episode for many reasons. First, some researchers (e.g., Beach; Faigley and Witte; Flower et al.; Sommers) have shown that revising is a crucial factor that separates successful writers from less successful ones. More significant, it has been our own experience that students often confuse revising with editing, our final episode. When you revise, you are making changes on a large scale, dealing with what Thomas Reigstad and Donald McAndrew call “higher-order concerns.” This is when you realize that the “real” start of your essay is on page 3 and that you're better off saving the first two pages for another day. This is also when you realize that you've been repeating yourself on pages 2 and 4 and can perhaps group those parts together. And, finally, this is when you realize (and all of these realizations might come from your own reading of your drafts, a friend or peer's reading, or a writing center tutor's questions) that you simply need to develop one of your points more fully or flesh out a description or make much clearer just what your point is (and thus return to some planning strategies). Dealing with higher-order concerns is often what makes your writing go from good to great.

Contrast the moves above with what we'll call *later-order concerns*,<sup>2</sup> things such as fiddling with your wording, checking your spelling, making sure you've used *you're* instead of *your*. These sorts of sentence-level fixes should come later in the process (though we won't claim that all writers don't fiddle with words and sentences as they draft; for less-experienced writers, however, the fiddling can subsume getting any real writing done). Also, sentence-level fixes are much more the province of editing than revising. They are certainly important and shouldn't be neglected, but an obsession with error should be avoided at all costs.

Strategies you might use when revising:

- Any or all of those you used for planning and drafting.
- Seeking feedback: We won't necessarily assume that, because you're learning to be a writing center tutor, you were a dutiful user of writing center services yourself (though we do hope so). Nevertheless, seeking

<sup>2</sup>Reigstad and McAndrew call these *lower order concerns*; however, we'll call them *later-order concerns* because we think that correctness is pretty important, especially to writers and often

feedback at any episode in the writing process is valuable, and revising is perhaps the point at which most writers seek feedback. Rather than imagine an intended reader, why not seek out a real one and find out if you're getting your point across?

- **Glossing your text:** An effective revising strategy we've found is to go back over our drafts, writing in the margins a brief (just a couple of words) description of each paragraph's content (we sometimes call this writing an outline in reverse). When you look at your descriptions, you can detect whether you've been repeating yourself. If your descriptions are difficult to write, you have an indication that your paragraph is unfocused or consists of too many topics. Your marginalia can also include not just the content of your paragraphs, but their function within sections or the essay as a whole. Now is the time you can discover that the paragraph you've marked "conclusion" contains an entirely new topic or that you're spending too much time on a single idea that's not central to your main point.

### The Final Episode: Editing/Proofreading

Having made mention of later-order concerns, we would be remiss not to suggest some strategies for approaching editing/proofreading (and keep in mind that we'll discuss the important differences between editors and tutors in Chapter 3). Perhaps the best bit of advice we can offer is to edit in several passes with a different focus on each pass. For instance, you might read your text once just looking for spelling mistakes (and reading backwards—from the end to the beginning—can force you to see each word in isolation). And then you might read your text looking only to shorten sentences and paragraphs, cutting out excess words. And then you might read focusing on the kinds of homonyms that have given you trouble (the find/replace function of your word-processing software is great for this strategy).

One other strategy we offer writers in the writing center is to have them read their drafts aloud, if not to their tutors, then simply to themselves. Reading aloud forces you to *hear* your language and see errors that your eyes glossed over previously. Overall, the idea in editing/proofreading is to create some distance between yourself and your text or, more accurately, between what you've said and how you've said it. If you're still clarifying the point you are trying to make, you are revising. If you put that content aside and focus on the mechanics of your language, you are editing. This distinction is why we caution student writers to save editing for the very end of their process. Why fiddle with your mechanics when you might strike that entire sentence or paragraph in the service of clarifying your point?

## TUTORS AND THE WRITING PROCESS

In no way have we been exhaustive in our list of strategies during each episode in the process (we encourage you to refer to the many books on these topics). One thing we do want to point out, however, comes back to the ideas of control and flexibility, one of those contrasts central to writing and to tutoring. Writers need to develop control of these strategies, and this control includes not simply knowing what strategies might be available, but knowing how to use a strategy. And then not just knowing what and how, but knowing when the use of a strategy would be appropriate (this strategic knowledge concept comes from reading researchers Scott Paris, Margerie Lipson, and Karen Wixson). Our previous example of outlining is a case in point. For years and years and still today in many textbooks, writing seemed to be a relatively simple process that started with choosing a topic and then writing an outline. However, we've worked with many frustrated writers in the writing center who told us, "I just cannot seem to come up with my thesis and outline." Well, that's not a surprise since they haven't created any material yet to find a focus or to organize into an outline. They simply didn't yet know what they wanted to say (content), much less how they would say it (structure). Applying the strategy of outlining at this point for these writers will lead to nothing but frustration. Instead, you can help these writers generate material in order to find a central focus. Brainstorming, mapping, clustering, or any of the strategies we described in Episode 1 would be useful. Once again, in terms of strategies, writers need to know the what, how, and when; they need to be flexible and adjust the way they work, depending upon a host of factors—the writing task itself, the conditions under which they are writing, the point of the process that they need to emphasize at that moment, and countless other things that make writing such a complex act.

Flexibility and control can be tied to an important concept that has grown out of work in cognitive psychology—the idea of metacognition or thinking about thinking. Consider how aware you are of your writing process. Do you need to think about how to get started when you're given a writing task? Do you consider the various prewriting strategies at your disposal and the appropriateness of each for what you are facing? No doubt, as a successful writer, you've given some thought to these questions, though you've probably internalized the answers to some degree. But in our work with less-successful writers, we've seen that issues of how well they know and can control the processes they use to write can be problematic. Thus, a goal for every writer is to develop strategic knowledge about each phase of the writing process; writing center tutors can be a vital element in helping writers learn metacognitive control.

Perhaps the most important thing we can say about the writing process and your work as a tutor is this: Avoid creating clones of yourself, and avoid teaching *your* processes as if they are the tried and true methods of approaching any writing task. Sure, they've worked for you as an English major (or sociology or business or biology or undeclared major), but that doesn't mean they'll necessarily work for another. Instead, as a tutor, you should help writers develop control of and flexibility with their writing processes.

One clarification: We are not saying that you should never bring up the strategies you feel have been helpful to you. Remember that writers need to know *what* strategies are available. If you're a big fan of clustering and the writer has never tried it, pull out those big pieces of paper and have the writer cluster away. The same goes for any strategy. What's important is not to offer the strategy as a sure-fire solution; instead, you are helping writers develop their strategic repertoires. You can increase writers' options, teaching them what strategies are available, how to use those strategies, and the most appropriate time to apply a given strategy.

We've slipped somewhat into lecture mode here, but that's because the teaching of writing is fraught with instances of well-intentioned individuals simply applying the "teaching" methods that worked best for them (we've particularly seen this phenomenon when it comes to the teaching of grammar; "but I learned by diagramming sentences," they say). This tendency is difficult to avoid, and that is one of the important reasons why you need to reflect deeply upon your own writing processes. Oftentimes, we aren't even aware of how prescriptive and controlling our teaching behaviors can be. Keep in mind that your goal is to create options for writers, not cut them off. And one of the many joys of tutoring is that *you* will learn, from writers, strategies that you had never considered before. Thus, an important line of inquiry that you can pursue in any tutoring session is to ask, "So, how did you go about writing this?"

One last point: Many writers don't necessarily ply their trade in response to assigned topics and in exchange for a grade or class credit. Those conditions are unique to writing in academic settings. And it is in those settings that the writing process and the tutor's role in that process need special consideration.

## WRITING IN ACADEMIC SETTINGS

We've made the point a couple of times in this chapter that the writing process model that we offer is idealized. This quality is perhaps most true when it comes to the application of the model to writing in academic settings. Consider the questions about purpose and audience ("What is my

purpose for writing? Who are my intended readers, and how much do they know about my topic?"). If you are writing a paper for a class, obviously your purpose is to complete an assigned task and your audience is your instructor. Of course, you might say that your purpose is to convince your reader of your point of view and your audience consists of your peers. However, in most instances, this audience won't be giving you a grade or sending your name in to the registrar at the end of the term in order for you to receive credit for the course. Most writing assignments are quite artificial, and your audience—your instructor—holds tremendous evaluative authority. These elements cannot help but powerfully affect the writing done in academic settings.

What we are addressing here is the relationship between the writer, the instructor, and the writer's text. We hope that you have been lucky enough to feel empowered by the writing you have done and that your instructors haven't made the writing they've required merely a test of how well you've mastered the course content (not that there isn't a role for this sort of writing, but it's certainly a limited role). Instead, you've been able to use writing to make meaning, whether that means discovering and communicating how you feel about a significant event in your life, an important reading, or a topic you feel strongly about. And you've not just found meaning through writing, but you're able to share that meaning with others (your readers, of course)—connections that remind us how much we depend upon human fellowship.

However, some writers you might work with in the writing center won't be coming from such positive experiences. They fully realize that the purpose of their essay is to get a grade and eventually course credit and that their audience is their powerful instructor. Thus, their expectation is that you help them figure out just what it is their instructor wants and how they can go about getting a decent grade.

Other writers, both native and nonnative English speakers, will seemingly be at a "cultural divide" from their instructors, their writing tasks, and, often, from you. Differences and cultural expectations due to language, ethnicity, gender, race, and class can often manifest themselves in something as "simple" as a paper due for a class. For instance, some students' writing closely resembles their speaking, and if these students speak with accents or in nonprivileged form, such as Black English, you might be put into the position of defending the implied values of academic writing—values that stem from largely Western, male, and Caucasian influences. Before you know it, you will be assuming a "regulatory role," as Nancy Grimm calls the function of writing centers, often inadvertently, to manage difference and act as an enforcement mechanism for the status quo.

Now, rather than have you resign your tutoring job before you get started, we want to point out that these dilemmas, while vital and complex,

are also best managed by acting in ways that we recommend throughout this book: being sensitive to writers' backgrounds and challenges, asking questions about the writers' tasks and their understanding of those tasks, and working to create options for writers, not to close off those possibilities. Closer investigation of these dilemmas also offers excellent opportunities for writing center research. In Chapter 4, we'll delve more deeply into those often assumed expectations that you and writers will bring to a writing center session and how they can affect your work.

### RENT TO OWN

A notion central to writing center work is that writers need to "own" their texts. In Chapter 3, we draw a distinction between editing—something that perhaps many of your classmates have sought from you because they recognized your writing abilities—and tutoring. As we have discussed, many writers might come to the writing center under the impression that a tutor will simply fix their texts. We often call this the dry-cleaner model of writing center and unfortunately have had more than a few writers ask us if they could drop off their papers and then return when they were "done." However, tutors don't fix texts; we teach writers how to fix texts. We don't tell writers what to write; we ask questions about and react as readers to what writers have already written or are thinking of writing. In these ways, writers "own" their texts, and writing center workers respect this ownership just as we would want it for ourselves.

Nevertheless, the student-text-teacher relationship complicates notions of ownership. For many writers, a more accurate concept would be that they "rent" their texts, occupying a topic and content for the length of time specified by the teacher/landlord and thinking little of what they have written once the rental period has ended. This is perhaps why we have had writers tell us flat out in writing center sessions that they plagiarized much of their research papers or that they "hate to write" but know that they need to overcome the "burden" of a required writing course. Writing is not meaningful for these writers because they have never had the experience of its meaning (in school, at least; we've also seen that some of the most reluctant writers in our classes are avid private writers, keeping journals and writing poetry that they would never share). Do these writers "own" the writing they are doing in their classes?

For the writing center tutor, these issues certainly complicate neat renderings of the writing process. At times, writers will position you as proxies for their instructors, expecting an evaluation of their writing. At other times, they will put you in the role of conspirator, especially when they admit

plagiarizing or simply not caring about what they're writing. What is important is that you are aware of the writing process—especially the ideas of control and flexibility—and how writing in academic settings affects that process. As a student yourself, you know best what it means to write in academic settings and can best impart to those you work with in the writing center the strategies that are effective.

It is our experience that most writers are eager to find meaning in what they write, even if the task wasn't best designed to achieve that end. And one of the great pleasures in writing center work is helping writers find that meaning. Your knowledge of the writing process will be vital in providing that help.

# New Media Matters: Tutoring in the Late Age of Print

by Jackie Grutsch McKinney

## **About the Author**

Jackie Grutsch McKinney teaches and directs the Writing Center at Ball State University. Her current research and recent publications reflect her interest in how changes in technology and other influences may necessitate re-evaluation of writing center theories and pedagogies. She lives in Muncie, Indiana with her husband, two little boys, and feisty cat.

At the turn of the century, John Trimbur predicted that writing centers would become “Multiliteracy Centers,” drawing on the terminology of the New London Group (30). These re-envisioned centers, he suggested, would provide help for students working on a variety of projects: essays, reports, PowerPoint presentations, web pages, and posters. His prediction has proved true to some degree most notably in the state of Michigan. The University of Michigan’s Sweetland Writing Center opened a Multiliteracy Center in 2000 within its writing center, a place where students “could receive one-to-one support as they worked on digital projects such as websites, PowerPoint presentations, and other forms of communication that depend on multiliteracies” (Sheridan, “Sweetland” 4). Additionally, at Michigan State, digital writing consultants worked with students on digital texts as early as 1996 (see Sheridan, “Words” and DeVoss). Institutions outside of Michigan have responded to new media writing also. The Worcester Polytechnic Institute where Trimbur works renamed its writing center the Center for Communication Across



the Curriculum, with “workshops” in writing, oral presentation, and visual design (Trimbur 29), and the Center for Collaborative Learning and Communication was created at Furman University (Inman). Many other centers have not changed names but have begun tutoring students on a variety of texts.

However, in one of the few published articles on writing centers and new media, entitled “Planning for Hypertexts in the Writing Center...or Not,” Michael Pemberton asks if writing centers should open their doors to students working on hypertexts. Although he answers “maybe” he believes directors should decide based on their local needs and constraints—the bulk of his argument seems to say “no” more loudly than “yes,” as seen here:

Ultimately, we have to ask ourselves whether it is really the writing center’s responsibility to be all things to all people. There will always be more to learn. There will always be new groups making demands on our time and our resources in ways we haven’t yet planned for. And there will never be enough time or enough money or enough tutors to meet all those demands all of the time. If we diversify too widely and spread ourselves too thinly in an attempt to encompass too many different literacies, we may not be able to address any set of literate practices particularly well. (21)

Now—twenty years after Stephen Bernhardt urged us to *see* student texts; after Craig Stroupe, more recently, argued for the visualization of English studies; after Diana George showed us how visual literacy has been a part of writing instruction since the 1940s; and after Gunther Kress argued convincingly that the revolution in writing dominated by the image is not coming, it is already here—the writing center community seems divided on whether writing centers should work with new media.

Though at first blush I thought that Pemberton’s argument was shortsighted, upon reflection, I think this sort of response actually speaks to an understandable uncertainty. We are fairly sure that we do good work with paper essays, pencils, and round tables. We are just not sure that we can do good work when those things change into new media texts, computer screens and speakers, mice and keyboards, and computer desks. The argument follows that if we are not certain we can do good work, then we should not do it at all.

I agree with Pemberton that we shouldn't take on work that we are not prepared for. But our agreement only goes so far, because I *do* think it is our job to work with all types of writing in the writing center—including new media. In this article, then, I suggest that writing centers need to offer tutoring in new media texts, but not the same tutoring we've always done. I begin by briefly defining *what* new media are (or, really, how I will use the term) and outlining *why* I think writing center tutors should work with new media texts. The bulk of this essay is devoted to *how* to tutor new media, since I see that as the crux of the issue, so in the last part, I describe the ways that writing center directors and staffs wanting to work with new media can evolve their practices to do so.

## What Is New Media?

Scholars use the term “new media” in a handful of ways that both overlap and diverge, which can make matters complicated. Are new media texts digital? Can they be print? Are they the same as multimodal texts? Or are they employing a different rhetoric? Cynthia Selfe, Anne Wysocki, and Cheryl Ball each offer definitions of new media that I find helpful, not because they agree with one another, but rather because I can see from the sum of their individual definitions the exciting range of new media texts.

For Cynthia Selfe, new media texts are digital. She defines new media texts as “texts created primarily in digital environments, composed in multiple media, and designed for presentation and exchange in digital venues” (“Students” 43). Although such texts contain alphabetic features, she claims that “they also typically resist containment by alphabetic systems, demanding multiple literacies of seeing and listening and manipulating, as well as those of writing and reading” (“Students” 43). She would use “new media” to describe a web portfolio or another text viewed on screen that would contain alphabetic texts and other modes, too.

Anne Wysocki, though, sees new media as any text that in its production calls attention to its own materiality:

I think we should call “new media texts” those that have been made by composers who are aware of the range of materialities of texts and who

then highlight the materiality: such composers design texts that help readers/consumers/viewers stay alert to how any text—like its composers and readers—doesn't function independently of how it is made and in what contexts. ("Openings" 15)

This attention to materiality means the text might or might not be digital. As Wysocki writes, "new media texts do not have to be digital; instead, any text that has been designed so that its materiality is not effaced can count as new media" (15). An example of a new media text that isn't digital is Wysocki et al.'s *Writing New Media* itself. Design choices in this text, such as the horizontal orientation of the page numbers, make readers "stay alert" to how the writers are playing with the usual conventions of a book. The key term for Wysocki's conception of new media, then, is materiality.

A third definition of new media comes from Cheryl Ball in "Show, Not Tell: The Value of New Media Scholarship." She writes that new media are "texts that juxtapose semiotic modes in new and aesthetically pleasing ways and, in doing so, break away from print traditions so that written text is not the primary rhetorical means" (405). For Ball, then, like Selfe, new media is multimodal and digital. Unique to Ball's definition, however, is that what's "new" in new media is the way in which these texts make arguments—the primacy of non-textual modes. New media texts make fundamentally different types of arguments. She illustrates this difference in her article through analysis of two web texts. One relies on print conventions to make its linear argument; the other radically departs from print conventions as it asks readers to compose the argument by dragging and dropping audio, still images, and text to play together in an order determined by the viewer/reader.

Combined, the three definitions show a range of texts that are "new" in significant ways: 1) their digital-ness; 2) their conscious materiality or form; 3) their multimodality; and/or 4) their rhetorical means. Of course, texts that fall under the category of *new* media by one or more of these definitions have existed for some time, but it is only recently that students, especially in writing classrooms, have been regularly asked to read or compose new media texts. The norm in colleges and universities for decades has been typed, double-

spaced, thesis-driven texts on 8½-by-11-inch, stapled, white paper. Thus, in this article, when I say that we should train tutors to work with new media, I mean the sorts of texts that would fit any of the three (Wysocki's, Selfe's, or Ball's) definitions outlined above. Practically speaking, this would mean that tutors would also be trained to work with texts that are not traditional, paper, alphabetic, text-only, academic print essays or assignments. Increasingly common, new media assignments in first-year composition (FYC) include PowerPoint presentations or slidecasts; video essays and documentaries; audio essays or podcast series; posters, collages, and other visual arguments; websites or hypertexts; and comic books, animations, or graphic novels. These are the sorts of texts we must be prepared to work with in the writing center in the twenty-first century in addition to the more traditional texts that have been the norm.

## Why Tutor New Media?

Pemberton suggests four ways of dealing with new texts in writing centers: 1) ignore them since they will rarely appear; 2) use specialist tutors; 3) treat new media texts like other texts; or 4) train all tutors to work with them.<sup>1</sup> The last of these is the approach I will argue for; I believe the writing center is the place to tutor students with their new media texts. I think all tutors should be trained to work with these texts and that these texts have unique features, which means some of our traditional tutoring practices will not work (more on this later). Here, I will briefly defend my belief that we should take on the task of tutoring new media. Many readers, I imagine, will not need convincing, as writing centers around the country already work with new media writing. For these readers, this section might help them articulate this new work to colleagues or administrators who question the evolution of their writing centers. Other readers might find themselves more resistant to offering what they perceive as yet another service when demands on their resources and time are already too high. I can empathize with this position but do my best to articulate how I do not think tutoring new media is something we can or should opt out of. It is not another thing—it is *the* thing we have always done, just in new forms, genres, and media.

### *Reason #1: New Media Is Writing*

Writing has irrevocably changed from the early days of writing centers. Early writing centers in the 1960s and 1970s developed peer tutoring techniques when student texts were written by hand or with typewriters. Adding another mode—even a simple image—to paper texts was difficult and usually avoided. The 1980s and 1990s brought us personal computers with word processing, but for the earlier part of this period, the texts writing centers worked with did not radically change. Word processors made texts that looked like they came from typewriters; texts were composed on screen but printed and distributed on paper.

Fast forward to the 2000s. Student texts now are nearly always composed on screen. Most students have their own computers—laptops are popular. Many texts that students compose, even for FYC, never leave the screen. Students write reading responses in a course management system, like BlackBoard. They post the response to the course discussion board where the instructor and other students respond. Likewise, longer writing assignments—essays and web pages—can be “turned in” and “turned back” without ever being printed out. In fact, when Microsoft Word 2007 was released, it sported a new default typeface created for onscreen viewing, replacing the long-reigning Times New Roman, because of the frequency with which texts—even word-processed texts—were viewed on screen.

In these ways, we have witnessed a fundamental change in the textual climate. Before, putting a text on paper—and writing for that linear, left-to-right, top-to-bottom, page-to-page form—was *the* way to write. That has changed. Now, there are many ways to communicate through writing; consequently, putting a text to paper is now a rhetorical choice that one should not make hastily. We ought to really think through whether a paper essay, say, is the best way to reach our audience or purpose. If we decide to compose paper essays knowing we have the wide range of available textual choices, we are deeming the paper essay the best way to meet our rhetorical ends. Many of us, perhaps, have spent our lifetimes writing paper essays because that was how arguments were made—academically if not otherwise. The paper essay was the default. This is no longer the case even in academic circles. Many academic conference presentations



are not paper essays read to the audience but arguments presented with PowerPoint slideshows, videos, animations, and print or digital posters, suggesting that many academic writers, upon weighing their rhetorical choices, are no longer choosing paper essays.

I think it is unreasonable to grant that writers have a wide range of options for meeting their rhetorical ends—even academically—yet to insist that we will only help with those texts that writing centers have historically worked with, namely, paper essays and assignments. New media is “new,” as the earlier definitions show, yet it is still writing. More than that, it is a type of writing that academia and the greater public value more and more.

Sending students with new media texts to another center or a specific tutor, as some centers have done, could give the message that new media is not writing, that it is not something the writing center values. Some universities might be in the position, as the University of Michigan was, to create a separate center for new media texts. But many of us struggle, annually, to keep one center open. Many of us also struggle to run one center, and most of us would not find additional compensation for willingly increasing our workload, I imagine. However, preparing all tutors to work with new media texts requires no second space or additional staffing. It does not necessarily require great investments in new technology or technology training. Most writing centers are likely adequately outfitted with at least one, if not several, computers on which to view digital texts. We might very well want to acquire large monitors or projectors to enable viewing of certain texts (e.g., slidecasts, video essays, or PowerPoint presentations), but these texts can be viewed on small screens for the purpose of tutor response.

### *Reason #2: The Line between New Media and Old Media Is Blurry*

Though I attempted a clear-cut definition of new media texts in the previous section, it is often the case that a text straddles the old media/new media line. A writing center that officially works with only essays, reports, and other such alphabetic texts will increasingly, if not already, find multimodality and digitality a part of such texts. Pemberton’s question about hypertexts is a good example. He meant,

I think, to question whether writing centers ought to work with digital texts composed in HTML and viewed in web-browsers, otherwise known as web pages. Yet many programs now, including Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, allow for hypertext links (not to mention color, images, charts, sound, animation, and video), so traditional essays are quickly becoming less, well, traditional. If we say we do not work with hypertexts, would we then not work with essays that contain links?<sup>9</sup> Or what of a webpage that contained an essay with no links?<sup>9</sup> When is it an essay and when is it hypertext?

I think a writing center that sets out to determine when a traditional essay becomes a new media text—in order to say “yes” we work with these or “no” we don’t work with those—will find this an increasingly difficult task. Likewise, a writing center that asserts that it can only help with the “writing” part of a new media text is also on shaky ground. The alphabetic text in a new media text is subsumed into the whole and must be read in context of the whole composition.

*Reason #3: If We Don't Claim It for Writing,  
Others Will Subsume It as Technology*

If we surrender the composition of web texts or other new media texts to computer science or another department on campus, we allow new media composition to be lost to the technology. As Danielle DeVoss writes, “Writing center theory and practice must . . . evolve so we can situate ourselves as crucial stakeholders, working towards more complex and critical use of computing technologies and computer-related literacies” (167). If composing new media texts are just about mastering the technology, then we can be convinced (or others will try to convince us) that new media is better left to those on campus who know the most about technology. For example, if creating a website is only about learning HTML or CSS, then we could let the computer science department teach it. Yet, if we consider new media as texts composed consciously in multiple modes, we would have to acknowledge that we are responsible for and good at teaching composing.<sup>2</sup> We ought to speak up about how creating digital texts involves more than mastering a software program just as loudly as we speak up about how writing in general is more than mastering MLA format or rules for comma usage.

New media texts are texts written for particular occasions, purposes, and audiences. As such, writers of new media still need human feedback. Related to this, the “CCCC Position Statement on Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments,” a guide for classroom instruction of digital writing, advises, “Because digital environments make sharing work especially convenient, we would expect to find considerable human interaction around texts; through such interaction, students learn that humans write to other humans for specific purposes.” The statement reminds us that digital texts are rhetorical and therefore need rhetorical feedback—of the ilk a writing center typically provides—not just technical troubleshooting. The evolved writing center secures a spot for humans to meet other humans over texts, digital or not. Working with students on their new media texts asserts our stake as composing professionals in the new media age.

## How to Tutor New Media

In the previous two sections I argued, perhaps paradoxically, that there is something new and different about new media writing, yet that it is writing and therefore we should tutor writers working on it. For me, there is enough that is “new” about new media that I had to ask myself how well our traditional tutoring practices address it. Trimbur is clear, too, that the change in types of projects we see in the center will change our tutoring. He writes,

The new digital literacies will increasingly be incorporated into writing centers not just as sources of information or delivery systems for tutoring but as productive arts in their own right, and writing center work will, if anything, become more rhetorical in paying attention to the practices and effects of design in written and visual communication—more product-oriented and perhaps less like the composing conferences of the process movement. (30)

I have to agree with Trimbur that it would be foolish not to prepare my tutors to work with these texts. What I have come to believe is that accepting new media texts necessitates rethinking our dominant writing center ideas and revising our common practices. Practices vary from center to center, from tutor to tutor. Still, there are some

practices espoused repeatedly in the literature of the field and tutor training manuals that seem to compose our general tenets. Many of these practices will have to change. Although such radical re-imaginings of writing center work may seem daunting, we could see this as an occasion to reconsider how well we are responding to all texts, to all writers—an occasion to improve the work we do.

Up to this point, I have been concerned with arguing that we ought to work with new media; now I complicate that. I think it would be irresponsible not to think through (and follow through with) consequent changes to our practices. In what follows, I look at the often-espoused practices for tutoring writing, particularly the ways we read student texts and the ways we respond.

### *How We Read Student Texts*

Ever since Stephen North published his writing center manifesto, “The Idea of a Writing Center,” writing center scholars and practitioners have been guided by this statement: “in a writing center the object is to make sure that writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction. In axiom form it goes like this: our job is to produce better writers, not better writing” (37). What follows this writing center mantra is important; he writes, “In the center, we look *beyond* or *through* that particular project, that particular text, and see it as an occasion for addressing our primary concern, the process by which it is produced” (38, emphasis added). This idea has been translated into practice in various ways. For one, Christina Murphy and Steve Sherwood, in *The St. Martin’s Sourcebook for Writing Tutors*, describe tutoring in terms of “pre-textual,” “textual,” and “post-textual,” where the goal of tutoring is, indeed, to get beyond the text. In these three stages, the tutor is to first talk about the paper with the client, then read the paper with the client, and finish by moving from the paper and dealing with the client’s issues in writing in general.

Another way to “look beyond” particular projects is to not physically look at them. This comes in the form of a hands-off policy in relation to student texts. We train our tutors to leave the text in front of the client or between tutor and client. As Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli suggest in *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, “Give the student control of the paper. Keep the paper in front of the

student as much as possible. If you are working at a computer, let the writer sit in front of the screen as well as control the keyboard” (19). When a student hands a tutor a paper, the tutor often quickly puts it down on the table. Irene Clark and Dave Healy note that this practice, which they call the pedagogy of noninterventionalism, exists because of an ethical concern in some centers. If tutors hold the paper, write on the paper, or otherwise “own” the paper, they may be unwittingly helping the student too much, i.e., plagiarizing or editing. Linda Shamoon and Deborah Burns, in turn, call this hands-off practice “The Bible,” an orthodoxy that has attained the force of an ethical or moral code within writing center studies (175).

Likewise, tutors are encouraged to use a read-aloud method for tutoring. Tutors read the student text aloud to the client or request the client to do so. However, this common approach of reading texts in writing centers might not be helpful for students with new media texts. The intertwining of multiple modes may be lost if the tutor looks *through* the text or does not look *at* the paper or *at* the screen. Furthermore, there is no way to “read aloud” visual elements or sounds. Consequently, the tutor may just skip over these elements thereby privileging the verbal, perhaps to the detriment of the student.

For example, several years ago one of my composition students, “Amy,” took her final project to the writing center for help. She was working on her “book,” a type of portfolio project that asked students to rethink their semester’s work in terms of a consistent theme and design. She had decided to use divider pages featuring Winnie the Pooh throughout her book. It was an odd choice as a design feature that became downright inappropriate when one of her “chapters” was an essay on Hitler. The baffling juxtaposition of Pooh and Piglet and the horrific details in her essay surely did not escape her tutor; however, the tutor did not say anything to Amy about this choice quite possibly because the tutor was working under the typical assumption that the alphabetic text was her domain, or because the tutor never even saw this visual element since Amy held the book and read aloud to the tutor. Amy might have received a similar silence had she used certain types of online tutoring which ask writers to cut and paste their text into email forms or whiteboards, allowing tutors to see only



the alphabetic text.

How we read texts in writing centers is especially problematic for certain new media texts, such as digital texts, which offer the reader a choice in navigation—where to start, when to go back, where to go next. A tutor must look at a hypertext and interact with it to read it, which begs the question: how would one—or why would one—read aloud a website? The first step in evolving writing center practice, then, is insisting that tutors look at texts to *see* student writing. Stephen Bernhardt's suggestion to composition teachers that they ought to look *at* student texts instead of *through* them seems just as important for writing centers now. If we don't, Bernhardt warns that we are ensuring our own irrelevance as the gap widens between the literacies we have traditionally taught and the ones students need: "Classroom practice which ignores the increasingly visual, localized qualities of information exchange can only become increasingly irrelevant" (77). Doing so, we ask tutors to consider the materiality of texts from the resolution of images to the quality of paper for a resume.

Secondly, instead of asking tutors to read aloud, we can ask tutors to talk aloud as they negotiate a text—a subtle yet important change. In reading aloud, the tutor may be tempted to skip over nonverbal elements since the elements are, well, not verbal. In fact, in my own tutoring experience, I have worked with students who quickly turn the page past charts or graphs as if they are inconsequential to the text at hand. However, if the tutor talked through the text, he or she would instead render a reading of it, showing the student how it could be read in its entirety. For instance, imagine Amy taking her book to a talk-aloud session. The tutor right away would begin with the materiality of the text. "Wow, this is quite a big document. I see it has lots of pages. This, here, seems to be a title. Is this a collection of writings of sorts?" And then, "I'm noticing as we go through this that you've used Winnie the Pooh on each divider page. Why is that?"

This tactic would be immensely helpful for hypertexts, too. The tutor could talk through the links and her expectations for how to negotiate the pages. "OK, we've read through this page on Senator Clinton. I'd like to go back to the page on Moveon.org, but I don't see how I'd do that." Or, "The first thing I notice is these images

changing – fading into one another. They all seem connected by their subject – all protesters of sorts? This makes me think this website is about protesting even though the title says, ‘Citizens of America.’” This sort of talking aloud would let students see how a reader makes meaning by reading the various modes in the text: images, text, layout, color, movement, and so forth.

### *How We Talk About Student Writing*

In a typical writing center session, tutors are trained to read through the student’s text and then to set an agenda on what issues to tackle during the remainder of the session. Many tutors are trained to focus the tutorial on higher order concerns (HOCs) first. These are defined as “the features of the paper that exist beyond the sentence-level; they include clarity of thesis or focus, adequate development and information, effective structure or organization, and appropriate voice and tone” (McAndrew and Reigstad 42). Only after working through the “higher order” issues does the tutor turn to lower order concerns (LOCs), which primarily manifest on the sentence level. All in all, this practice makes sense. It is only logical to work students through revisions that might necessitate substantial changes first before tackling what is happening on a micro-level.

Nonetheless, there may be a problem with this practice for new media texts since tutors are not trained to see other modes, such as visual elements, as contributing to the overall meaning of the text. That is, they are not trained to see that visual elements can be and often are a higher order concern and should be attended to as such. For instance, a tutor, Bryan, told me last year of a student he worked with who was composing a scholarship essay. The student had selected an apple clip art border for his text that he felt was fitting for the type of scholarship – a scholarship for future teachers. These apples, which Bryan felt inappropriate for the genre, were really the only thing he remembered about the essay, yet were not something he discussed with the student since he said he wanted to discuss “the more important issues” first. Clearly, this is just one example, but I believe it does speak to the way we set agendas – what we decide to talk about with writers.

Tutors do not typically broach the subject of formatting without

direct questioning from the student because issues of formatting, if they are seen at all, are seen as LOCs or because tutors usually work with drafts and may assume the students will know how to “fix” such elements by the final copy. The visual aspects of a text may not even be on the tutor’s radar, let alone other modes such as sound, color, or motion. In numerous tutoring manuals, there is little acknowledgement that visual elements or document design are important for tutors to read and discuss with students. The closest are Ryan and Zimmerelli’s *Bedford Guide*, which states that lab reports should have headings, includes a page on PowerPoint presentations, and asks tutors to consider if resumes are “pleasing to the eye” (87), and Bertie Fearing and W. Keats Sparrow’s “Tutoring Business and Technical Writing Students,” which focuses mainly on issues of voice, diction, economy, emphasis, and parallelism, but also devotes one paragraph to typography, headings, and lists. Beyond this, there is little about the multimodality of academic essays and more often than not nothing about considering the multimodality of any other type of assignment. Even when telling tutors how to work with typically visually-heavy forms—manuals, instructions, memos, proposals, progress and feasibility reports—McAndrew and Reigstad do not show tutors how to give feedback on the non-verbal elements. Obviously, if writing centers are going to work with new media texts—those texts which purposely employ various modes to make meaning—tutors will have to be trained to know when and how the interaction of various modes are HOCs.

Furthermore, unless trained otherwise, tutors might not suggest the use of non-textual modes in revision planning with the student. There are moments as readers when the use of a diagram, illustration, or image could help with our comprehension of ideas, and there are times when the use of a bulleted list, graph, or chart allows a writer to present ideas succinctly. Tutors, as readers of and responders to texts, need to be able to describe to clients their expectations in terms of verbal and other elements and plot out the tutoring sessions to reflect that. Tutors need to be able to talk about new media texts, which requires both a broader understanding of rhetoric (of how new media texts are rhetorical) and a new set of terms about the interactivity between modes and the effects of that interactivity.

Several composition scholars have theorized how we might respond to or assess classroom-assigned new media writing. Several of them emphasize the rhetorical nature of new media, thereby arguing that we can respond to new media in ways similar to how we respond to other texts, as they are all rhetorical. For example, in “Looking for Sources of Coherence in a Fragmented World,” Kathleen Blake Yancey argues that we need new ways of talking about digital writing: “Without a new language, we will be held hostage to the values informing print, values worth preserving for that medium, to be sure, but values incongruent with those informing the digital” (89-90). To that end, she offers a heuristic for readers to ask of digital texts: What arrangements are possible? Who arranges? What is the intent? What is the fit between intent and effect? (96) Though she sees digital composition as different, she sees rhetoric as “being at the heart” of all the writing composition teachers assign and assess (90).

Likewise, Madeleine Sorapure’s “Between Modes: Assessing Student New Media Compositions” suggests teachers look for the use of the rhetorical tropes of metaphor and metonymy when assessing students’ new media compositions, thereby focusing on the relationship of modes. She writes,

Focusing assessment on the relations of modes might alleviate part of what Yancey described as the “discomfort” of assessment: that part that comes from our sense that we are not the most qualified people on campus to judge the effectiveness of the individual modes of image, audio, or video in a multimodal composition. But I think we are indeed qualified to look at the relations between modes and to assess how effectively students have combined different resources in their compositions. (4)

I think Sorapure’s idea is on the right track. We don’t need to be, say, filmmakers to respond to video in new media compositions. However, we do need to be able, at a minimum, to respond to how the video relates to the whole of the text. As Yancey, Sorapure, and others suggest, new media texts are rhetorical. We can talk about how the text is motivated, how it is purposeful, how it is written to a particular audience. These conversations can be similar to the conversations we have about old media texts.<sup>4</sup> Yet if we do read rhetorically to determine

how well a text meets its ends, our tutors need to be able to explain how a text has or has not done so. I do not think our language for talking about texts is adequate in and of itself for this task.

Instead, I have increasingly drawn on other fields to give tutors ways to talk about the interactivity of modes and their sense of the gestalt in students' new media texts. Teaching tutors these terms will give them a vocabulary to describe the relationships between modes; without such an understanding, many times students and tutors assume that images, graphics, animation, or other modes are decoration or supplementation (although they probably won't use that term) for the real mode of writing: the words. I've tutored more than one student who assumed that visuals always make sense to readers, that other modes don't need interpretation like words do.

As a start, I think it is appropriate to teach tutors Karen Schriver's terms for the relationships between modes, Robin Williams's principles of good design, and Cynthia Selfe's criteria for visual assessment. Each of these, I believe, gives more concrete language for tutors or teachers responding to new media. The space of this article will not permit me to draw out extended examples of each of the terms; I hope that readers interested in these ideas will look to the primary texts. However, I will briefly look at a sample new media text to see how this terminology as a whole might help a tutor respond to such a text.

### *Relationships Between Modes: Karen Schriver*

Schriver's terms were intended to describe how visuals work with alphabetic text, though they easily translate to the relationships between different modes, too, such as sound, video, and color.

*Redundant:* “substantially identical content appearing visually and verbally in which each mode tells the same story, providing a repetition of key ideas” (412)

*Complementary:* “different content visually and verbally, in which both modes are needed in order to understand the key ideas” (412)



- Supplementary:* “different content in words and pictures, in which one mode dominates the other, providing the main ideas, while the other reinforces, elaborates, or instantiates the points made in the dominant mode (or explains how to interpret the other)” (413)
- Juxtapositional:* “different content in words and pictures, in which the key ideas are created by a clash or semantic tension between the ideas in each mode; the idea cannot be inferred without both modes being present simultaneously” (414)
- Stage-setting:* “different content in words and pictures, in which one mode (often the visual) forecasts the content, underlying theme, or ideas presented in the other mode” (414)

### *Principles of Design: Robin Williams*

Williams’s four basic design principles come from her work *The Non-Designer’s Design Book*, where she tries to simplify design concepts for those who must design on paper or screen but do not do so as their primary occupation. Using this sort of text draws on the field of graphic design, which has multimodal composition at its heart.

- Contrast:* Difference created between elements for emphasis; elements must be made quite different or else the elements simply *conflict* with one another (63)
- Repetition:* How consistently elements (e.g., typeface, color, pattern, transition) are used; repetition unifies (49)
- Alignment:* How elements line up on a page, the visual connection between elements; “every item should have a visual connection with something else on the page” (31)
- Proximity:* How closely elements are placed on page or screen: related items should be close to one another, unrelated items should not be (15-17)

### *Visual Assessment Criteria: Cynthia Selfe*

The last set of terms comes from a chapter of *Writing New Media* in which Selfe, drawing on the work of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, gives assignments and rubrics for helping writing instructors incorporate new media into their classes. This set of terms is helpful in looking, literally, at the gestalt of a new media text.

*Visual impact:* “the overall effect and appeal that a visual composition has on an audience” (“Toward” 85)

*Visual coherence:* “the extent to which the various elements of a visual composition are tied together, represent a unified whole” (“Toward” 86)

*Visual salience:* “the relative prominence of an element within a visual composition. Salient elements catch viewers’ eye [*sic*]; they are conspicuous” (“Toward” 86)

*Visual organization:* “the pattern of arrangement that relates the elements of the visual essay to one another so that they are easier for readers/viewers to comprehend” (“Toward” 87)

### *Using the New Terminology to Respond to a New Media Text*

Figure 1 is a grayscale reproduction of a poster created by the Writing Center staff at Clarion University. They produce these posters collaboratively as a staff and sell customized versions via their website. This one, the “Criminal Justice Poster,” is one of my favorites. I selected this text to model a new media response because it fits within the very general definition of new media that I have used throughout this article, because it consciously takes advantage of its materiality as a poster, and because it relies on multiple modes to make its argument. It also is exchanged as a digital text first—composed digitally and bought from digital previews before it is printed poster-size. In addition, I wanted to select a text which a reader of this article could see in its entirety (though my response is to the original full-color file which can be viewed at <http://www.clarion.edu/80053.jpg>).

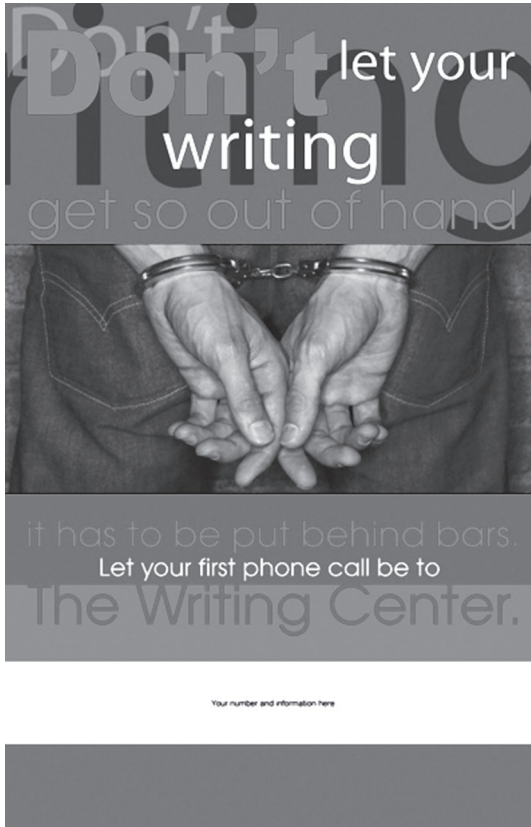


Fig. 1. Clarion "Criminal Justice Poster"

So, first off, what kind of relationship do we see between the modes here? The composer has used text, photograph, color, and typography to make this text. The image of the handcuffed person is in a *complementary* relationship with the text, "Don't let your writing get so out of hand it has to be put behind bars." The image helps give the reader context. Though the text is a threatening command (do this or else), the orange, bright blue, and green colors and typography are more playful than foreboding. Perhaps this *juxtaposition* is purposeful to play up the humor of the poster, or perhaps it takes away from the effect. This could be something to discuss with the writer.

We can also look at the principles of design at work here.

*Contrast* is evident in the change in typeface. The composer wanted to emphasize the word “Don’t,” so it appears larger than the other words. The different colors, sizes, and weight of the other words and background signal difference, perhaps of importance. “Don’t let your writing” is in one typeface; the rest of the text is in a very similar sans serif typeface, which makes for a *conflict*. *Repetition* is evident in the color choices; the background colors are also used for the type. The words “Don’t” and “writing” are actually repeated and faded into the background. There are varied *alignments* here. Mostly, the text is center-aligned and shares the same base line. However, “Don’t” and “let your” don’t share a common baseline. The (mostly) center alignment makes the words on the left margin and right margin nearly line up. Further, there is no consistent alignment within the colored blocks; the text sits near the bottom in blue and green squares but floats to the top in orange. There are two sentences here, and the *proximity* is very close between them, signaling to the reader that these ideas are closely related. The image breaking through the first sentence makes the reader understand the picture as part of the message of that first sentence.

Finally, we could look at this as a visual argument. Using Selfe’s terms, we would probably acknowledge that the overall *visual impact* is quite striking. This is a poster that stands out because of the image and bright (though not garish) colors. The purpose of a poster is to call attention to itself, and this poster has the potential to do that. The *visual coherence* is also quite strong because of the repetition of colors and type. The poster will be customized in the white box with the purchaser’s logo or information. There is a possibility that there will be less coherence when that element is introduced if there are different types or colors. The elements that are *visually salient* are the word “Don’t” and the photograph. Both hold key positions—one in the top left corner and one across the center of the poster. The quick in-a-glance message provided by these two elements is, “don’t end up in cuffs”—pretty powerful! The placement of the prominent “Don’t” at the top invites the reader to start there and move down; thus the *visual organization* of elements tells the reader how to use the text.

At this point, I should mention two things. First, I am not

implying that a tutor would or should go through reading/responding to a text as extensively as this during a session. Like other sessions, the tutor and student would discuss what seems most pressing. I, for one, would probably talk to this composer about how color and type relate to text and image and the overall alignment – another tutor might focus on other elements. Which brings me to my second point: not everyone using these terms is going to come to the same reading. The reader’s job with new media is still interpretation. Responding to new media requires close interaction with the text and ways to talk about what we read/view/interact with.

## Summary and Closing Thoughts

This article has been about reconsidering how we train tutors to read and respond to texts. The subject here has been new media texts. I’ve asked us to reconsider how we tutor and how we talk to students about their writing. The impetus for these evolved practices is the arrival of increasing numbers of new media texts assigned in university classes. As new media texts consciously and purposefully employ multiple modes to make meaning, they require us to direct our attention to texts differently. Current practices won’t suffice, as they limit us to the alphabetic text. Thus, I believe it is imperative to train all tutors in these evolved practices because they will change the ways we respond to all texts, considering more than we have before, perhaps in significant ways. In short, here’s the 28-word, visually-arranged version of this article:

| <b>Twentieth-Century Tutoring</b> | <b>Twenty-First-Century Tutoring</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Read aloud                        | Talk aloud                           |
| Getting beyond the text           | Interacting with the text            |
| Zoomed in: talk about words       | Zoomed out: talk about whole         |



It strikes me that writing center studies is at a crossroads, a moment in time where tough decisions regarding the scope of our practices need to be made. Certainly, changes in composing technologies have asked us to push beyond the writing center practices that developed in the 1970s writing center boom. I, for one, do not think this is a time for conservatism, for preserving the tradition for the sake of tradition. Though I understand the impulse as a writing center director to say, “Not one more thing! We do enough!,” to me, tutoring new media is not another thing. Writing has evolved with new composing technologies and media, and we must evolve, too, because we are in the writing business. A radical shift in the way that writers communicate both academically and publically necessitates a radical re-imagining and re-understanding of our practices, purposes, and goals.

Finally, I want to address one of the concerns that I discussed earlier: that we are not sure that we can do a good job of tutoring new media, so perhaps we shouldn't try. I think we need to remember that writing centers are largely based on the idea that talk among peers will help. We've never been concerned about expert tutors or perfection, and our feathers get ruffled when others (students or professors) expect this. If we evolve the practices in the ways I suggest, tutors will not be experts in new media composing, but they will be able to offer a response. And that is what we do.

## NOTES

1. Pemberton focuses exclusively on hypertexts, not all new media.
2. For more on this, see Grutsch McKinney.
3. This could also hold true for tutoring via email or chat. The texts may be copied and pasted into an email and the tutor will not see the text as it will materialize for its intended audience, for example, how it prints out on the page.
4. For example, see JoAnn Griffin's schema in “Making Connections with Writing Centers” for discussing audience, purpose, form, context, organization, unity/focus, detail/support, style, and correctness of alphabetic essays, audio essays, and video essays (155-56).

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# Apps and Websites for College Success

## Document Management/Editing



**Dropbox** allows you to bring all of your photos, docs, and videos anywhere you go with this online web storage and synchronization service! After you install Dropbox on your computer, any file you save to your Dropbox will automatically save to all of your computers, mobile devices, and the Dropbox website. You can also share files with others, even if they do not have a Dropbox account.



**Documents To Go** allows you to view Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files & attachments. Supported file formats include .doc., .docx., .xls., .xlsx., .ppt., .pptx. Additional capabilities (ability to edit, view & create Microsoft Word, Excel, & PowerPoint files & view PDF's) available with the full version (for a fee).



**Pages** allows you to create, edit, and view documents wherever you are! Additional capabilities include adding images, creating footnotes and endnotes, viewing and constructing charts and graphs, and many more. Pages works with iCloud, so your documents stay up to date on all your devices — automatically.



**Numbers** allows you to make spreadsheets with tables, charts, photos, and graphics — using just your fingers! Choose from over 250 easy-to-use functions. Enter data and explore results with sliders, steppers, pop-ups, and intelligent keyboards. Numbers works with iCloud, so your spreadsheets stay up-to-date across all your devices — automatically.



**Prezi Viewer** allows you to present your prezis anywhere with simple, intuitive multi-touch gestures. Drag to pan and pinch to zoom in or out of topics.

## University Specific Apps



**FSU Mobile** allows you to stay up-to-date with all things FSU! If you are looking for sports schedules & scores, campus news & maps, or library info and contacts, FSU Mobile is the answer!



**Blackboard Mobile Learn** allows you to keep up with your courses, by letting you access them whenever and wherever you want. If your school licenses Blackboard Mobile Learn, you'll be able to use the app for free.

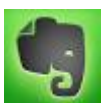


**TransLoc** allows you to see a second-by-second vehicle tracking map visualizing your bus' exact location and estimates how many minutes it will take to arrive. You'll also get announcements directly from your transit agency on situations that may affect you.

## Note-taking & Mind Mapping



**AudioNote** allows you the functionality of a notepad and voice recorder all in on note-taking tool. By synchronizing handwritten and typed notes with audio, AudioNote automatically indexes your meetings, lectures, or study sessions. It also mimics the functionality of the LiveScribe SmartPens.



**Evernote** allows you to take notes, capture photos, create to-do lists, record voice reminders — and makes these notes completely searchable, whether you are at home, at work, or on the go. It helps you stay organized, save your ideas and improve productivity.



**SimpleMind** allows you to turn your electronic device into a brainstorming, idea collection, and thought structuring device.



**Mindjet Maps** allows you to easily enter ideas, tasks, and meeting notes into intuitive visual maps that help you quickly organize concepts and prioritize action items. Instantly create new maps or import them from Mindjet Connect®.

## Study Aides



**Quizlet** allows you to pick from 3 mobile-only study modes to suit your learning style and take advantage of audio in 18 languages to reinforce pronunciation and retention. Seamless syncing between multiple electronic devices means all your Quizlet study sets are ready to use. You can also search Quizlet's database of over 21 million flashcard sets to find content already created. With full offline support you can study anywhere — even without the Internet.



**StudyBlue** allows users to make studying efficient and effective. Flip online flashcards for fast feedback on what you know, then re-study concepts you've not yet mastered using Study Filters. Review class notes or make flashcards whenever you have a minute to spare. A free StudyBlue.com account is required to use this app. Creating flashcards on the app requires an Internet connection to function properly, but there is an offline study mode you can use once flashcards are created.



**gFlash+** allows users access to a robust platform for creating, downloading, and manipulating flashcards. Users will have access to premium content from leading educational publishers and innovative implementation of "box"-style flashcards. An active wireless connection is required to download new cardsets, and view flashcards with videos. Once downloaded, text based flashcards, cached images, and cached sound clips can be used at offline.



**iStudious** allows you to create notebooks for each class and organize the notebook by lecture. After class, turn your notes into flashcards that you can study. iStudious integrates with Quizlet.com to share their set of more than 8 million + flashcard sets.



**Brainscape** allows you to personalize the timing of your study patterns. It is a web and mobile education platform that helps you learn as efficiently as possible, based on solid cognitive science. Whether you're learning a language, preparing for a test, or just acquiring some fun trivia, Brainscape spaces the repetition of each bite-sized concept based on exactly the right interval for YOUR brain. All you have to do is rate how well you know each concept, on a scale of 1-5, and Brainscape determines the right time to quiz you again. It's strangely addicting and is scientifically proven to slash your required study time.



**Khan Academy** allows you to learn almost anything for free. Our complete library contains over 3,500 videos covering a massive number of topics, including K-12 math, science topics such as biology, chemistry, and physics, and even the humanities with playlists on finance and history.



**iTunesU** allows you access to complete courses from leading universities and other schools — plus the world's largest digital catalog of free education content. Whether you're majoring in molecular biology at a university, taking Spanish in high school, or just interested in European history, you now have a valuable tool to help you learn anytime, anywhere.



**TED** allows users to listen and view riveting talks by remarkable people. The official TED app presents talks from some of the world's most fascinating people: education radicals, tech geniuses, medical mavericks, business gurus and music legends. Find more than 1,400 TEDTalk videos (with more added each week) on the official TED app.



## Student Productivity



**iHomework** allows you to organize your homework assignments by subject or due date. You can also color code each assignment. View your assignments by month, week, or day.



**myHomework** allows you to track classes, homework, tests, and assignments. The app includes a calendar, a listing of upcoming/late assignments, and resources for your course (syllabi, links, etc.).



**Do!** allows you to organize your to-do lists into a simple format. This app helps users keep clean, easy to read to-do lists all in one location.



**Remember the Milk** allows users to manage tasks from anywhere using their computer or mobile devices. Users can get email, SMS, or IM reminders as well as share your tasks with others in your circles.



**reQall** allows you to record your shopping lists, to-do lists, contact lists, and other tasks. You can group tasks according to their due dates, organize them into categories (school, work, home, etc.), and share reminders with your friends and family.



**Brain Organizer** allows you to categorize projects by name, date or type, and color code. This app helps to integrate both hemispheres of your brain while training you to more effectively organize tasks.



**Sticky Notes** allows you to produce creative notes and reminders. You can add alarms to the notes or use "task" notes for checklists. Select from dozens of visual note styles. Organize your notes into an unlimited number of sortable category folders. Password protect your notes. Share and collaborate on notes with others. Use Sticky Notes to create personal reminders, shopping lists, school notes, special notes to your loved ones, and more!



**TextMinder** allows you to schedule SMS text reminders to be sent to you at times you specify, repeating as often as you choose. Remind yourself of your medication, diet, exercise or financial goals, shopping, bills, household chores, and other to-do tasks. Never forget another homework assignment, class, or meeting again!



**Grades 2** allows you to receive reminders about upcoming assignments/tests and to quickly monitor your grade without doing any of the math yourself. Grades 2 helps you calculate what you need on upcoming assignments to meet your overall target grade as well as calculates your GPA and what your grade in the class needs to be to maintain a certain GPA.



**MyGradesToGo** allows students to easily see an up-to-date class average for all classes. This app keeps students on track to achieve their desired letter grade throughout the duration of the class by displaying the next grade needed on each assignment/test to maintain the minimum average needed for the overall class letter grade.



**School Grade Tracker** allows students to effortlessly keep track of terms, classes, assignment categories, and individual grades. Highly customizable to suit all types of classes and grades. Includes a built-in calendar to keep track of upcoming assignments, along with a GPA calculator and class grade prediction calculator.



**SelfRestraint** allows users to block access to certain web pages on the Internet. You still have full Internet capabilities, just not the websites you put on your "blacklist." You set the timer yourself, minutes, hours, or days. Rebooting or deleting the application will not let you access the websites you have blocked.



**SelfControl** Same as SelfRestraint but for Apple (iOS) devices.

## Personal Health & Financial Wellness



**Mint.com** allows you to sync your financial accounts into one easy to track location. The app automatically pulls in and categorizes your spending. Easy-to-understand graphs show you exactly where your money is going.



**Sleep If U Can** allows you to cut down on the time you waste snoozing. The app forces you to take a photo of something in your room before it will turn off the alarm.



**Wakey Wakey** allows you to wake up on time every day with an exciting game. Always be on time for school, work, appointments, etc. because the game that you must play to turn the alarm off is guaranteed to make yourself climb out of bed. You will never need to look at the home page for the time ever again as Wakey Wakey displays both the current time and the time that the alarm should ring. Other user-friendly features include repeating the alarm on specified days and easy toggling of the alarm.



**Nike Training Club** allows you to have own personal trainer, anytime, anywhere. Get lean, toned, and strong with more than 100 custom-built workouts. Take your goal further with all-new NikeFuel and calorie data. Detailed instructions and audio support are on hand to help you perfect each of Nike Training Club's dynamic drills. Choose a workout that fits your goal. Set it to your music, share your progress, and earn your rewards.



**Fleetly** allows you to reach your fitness goals. Earn points for logging your workouts, connect with friends and join challenges at all levels. Fleetly supports the full spectrum of fitness activities from yoga to weight training and from table tennis to long-distance running.



**Zombies, Run!** allows users to participate in an ultra-immersive running game and audio adventure. The story is delivered straight to your headphones through orders and voice recordings - and when you get back home, you use the supplies you've collected while running to build and grow your base.

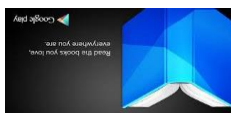


**MapMyRun** allows runners, joggers, and walkers of all ability levels and ages to track their progress. Easily track pace, distance, calories, and time with audio alerts and much more!



**Gas Buddy** uses gas price information provided by our users to bring drivers together to support the common goal of saving money on gas. Gas Buddy will find the cheapest gas near you by entering in your city/zip/postal code. Users earn points for reporting up-to-dates gas prices and are entered into drawings for gas cards.

## **Don't Forget the Built-In Apps Already on Your Electronic Device!**



**WRITING CENTER CONSULTANT  
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION & REFLECTION**

**Consultant:**

**E-mail Address:**

**Employment Dates:**

This table lists performance indicators for the work Consultants engage in at the Writing Center at Athens State University.

|          |                                 |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| <b>6</b> | Excellent                       |
| <b>5</b> | Very Good                       |
| <b>4</b> | Good                            |
| <b>3</b> | Meets Minimum Standards         |
| <b>2</b> | Fails to Meet Minimum Standards |
| <b>1</b> | No Evaluation                   |

Tiers 4-6 indicate levels of satisfactory performance.

Tier 2 & 3 indicate levels of performance that need to show marked improvement through areas of change.

Tier 1 indicates that there is not enough information to offer an evaluation of the consultant.

*Below are categories representing indicators for the work Consultants perform at the Writing Center at Athens State University. These categories are not exhaustive and other evaluation criteria might apply that are not listed below.*

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Dependability/Reliability</b> | Meets work schedule and fulfills job responsibilities. Consistently delivers what is required within deadlines and according to instructions. |
| Tier:                            | Comments:   |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Initiative</b> | Starts assignments without prompting and independently contributes ideas or proposes needed projects. Sees and acts upon new opportunities. |
| Tier:             | Comments:   |

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Preparation</b> | Consistently uses resources and consults with colleagues to become informed about each client/tutee's project and communication needs/goals. Actively seeks to shore up any gaps in disciplinary knowledge to skillfully tutor in any genre, on any topic. |
| Tier:              | Comments:  |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Professionalism</b> | Adapts to the changing needs of each client/tutee. Maintains a high level of openness and commitment to following through on each client/tutee's needs/objectives at all times. Shows regard for and sensitivity to the diversity and life experiences of clients/tutees. |
| Tier:                  | Comments:   |

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Attitude</b> | Displays a positive attitude towards goals and objectives of the Writing Center and its role within the University. Works well with others to accomplish goals. |
| Tier:           | Comments:   |

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Interpersonal Skills</b> | Ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with others. Actively seeks to build community within the Writing Center and Library. |
| Tier:                       | Comments:  |

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Overall Performance</b> | Works with minimal supervision, manages own time effectively, maintains control of all projects and responsibilities. |
| Tier:                      | Comments:   |

*For categories in which a consultant evaluated at Tier 2 or 3 levels of performance, below are proposed **action areas for improvement**. Please respond to these areas by indicating they are acceptable measures or by proposing changes.*

| <b>Action Area for Category (Dependability/Reliability, Initiative, Preparation, Professionalism, Attitude, Interpersonal Skills, Overall Performance):</b> | <b>Consultant Response:</b>  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>These action areas are acceptable measures for improvement that I will undertake. (Please indicate that you find the action areas acceptable by highlighting the text above.)</p> <p>I would like to propose the following changes and/or additional explanation to this action area: (Insert your text here)</p> |

*Below are areas in which Consultants may expect a relatively high level of effort to maintain quality standards; however, there may be oversights that cause a breakdown in one or many categories. Please **offer constructive criticism and details about circumstances that need attention**, if possible, for any of the areas below. Please **also offer feedback about what is going well and what helped in meeting your needs**.*

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Workplace Environment: Physical Space &amp; Technology</b> | Comments: |
|---|-----------|

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Workplace Environment: Atmosphere</b> | Comments: |
|--|-----------|

|                                      |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Communication of Expectations</b> | Comments: |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Appropriateness of Workload</b> | Comments: |
|------------------------------------|-----------|

|                                 |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Training &amp; Resources</b> | Comments: |
|---------------------------------|-----------|

I allow my Performance Evaluation to be released to on or off campus employers, if requested.

**Consultant Signature:**

**Date:**

The Writing Center Director has discussed the above performance evaluation with me. I have been given an opportunity to express any concerns regarding my position as a Consultant in the Writing Center.

**Consultant Signature:**

**Date:**

**Director Signature:**

**Date:**





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Spring 2016

T 3:30-4:30 & W 11-12

Facilitator: Joy Bracewell, Ph.D.

E-Mail: joy.bracewell@athens.edu

Phone: 256-216-6670

Office: Library, RM 121

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## Overview

This is a one-hour meeting for discovering, discussing, testing, and implementing tutoring practices that are informed by writing center, composition, new media, and educational research. Our time together will serve as a practical way for us to share information and workshop challenges related to tutoring, technology, and the projects each of you manage or work on.

## Goals

Engaging in discussion, preparing readings, and attending the consultant meetings this semester will enable you to:

- Understand how writing and communication processes work to promote learning across disciplines;
- Recognize how interpersonal dynamics are informed by identity (race, class, gender, age, sexuality, language background, etc.) and expectations;
- Identify and prioritize areas of concern in writing and communication projects;
- Apply and modify tutoring techniques to create a sense of shared goals and empathy within tutoring sessions;
- Find ways to build on your own personal aptitudes to practice tutoring approaches that work with your strengths and preferences;
- Facilitate your own growth and maturity as an individual and collaborative writer, communicator, and researcher.

## Requirements

1. Participate in the weekly seminar by attending, contributing to discussions, asking questions, and actively listening;
2. Complete the readings/viewings and projects with a high standard of quality, creativity, and integrity;
3. Use the meetings to inform your writing center praxis and bring your insights/questions/concerns about your work to the meeting.

## Evaluation

Your position as a consultant here is multi-faceted. Assessments of your work will be drawn from these crucial categories: dependability/reliability, initiative, preparation, professionalism, attitude, interpersonal skills, and overall performance. As director, my responsibilities include managing the workplace environment (physical space, technology, and atmosphere), communicating expectations, coordinating training and resources, and managing workloads.

## Materials

Ryan, L., & Zimmerelli, L. (2016). *The Bedford guide for writing tutors* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.).

Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Other articles & texts, TBA.

## Meeting

TUES. 3:30-4:30

Brittany Aldridge

Jensie Britt

Bill Bridges

Patrick Shields

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### 1/19—Meet in Library Tech Room

CRFs, Ch. 1: The Writing Center as Workplace/Visit to Sankofa Museum

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### 1/26—Meet in Library Tech Room

Ch. 7: Addressing Various Tutoring Situations—Focus on “The Writer Who Plagiarizes”

Dr. Mark Gale, Dir. of Academic Technology Services: SafeAssign

---

### 2/9—Meet in Library Tech Room

Ch. 8: Research in the Writing Center—Focus on “Selecting Your Methods”  
Dr. Bruce Thomas, Prof. of Public Safety and Health Administration

---

### 2/16—Meet in Library Tech Room

Ch. 5: Helping Writers across the Curriculum—Focus on “Digital or Multimodal Environments & PowerPoint”  
Mark Gale: Visual Tips/Presentations

---

### 2/24—Meet in Waters S-105

Ch. 3: Tutoring Writers through the Writing Process  
Dr. Robert Koch, Univ. of North Alabama: Workshopping your Writing

---

## Announcements/Business:

1/19 — Meet in Library, RM 215 (Visit to Sankofa Museum @ Sandridge Student Center Ballroom)

Before the meeting, for further exploration, please go the British Museum online for history of traveling exhibitions of transatlantic slavery:  
[http://teachinghistory100.org/objects/about\\_the\\_object/thomas\\_clarksons\\_campaign\\_chest](http://teachinghistory100.org/objects/about_the_object/thomas_clarksons_campaign_chest)  
<http://gallery.nen.gov.uk/gallery1122-museumbox.html>

- Forging Towards Multimodality—Writing Center Promo: <https://youtu.be/FCqzc93ZLrY>
- CRFs: template, professionalism checkers
- Projects: GDrive (Brittany—Social Media, Jencie—Weekly Quote, Patrick—Email Organization & Inventory, Lauren—Blog, Bill—Newsletter, Brittany, Patrick, Bill—Resources & Videos, Jencie—Faculty Syllabi/Assignments)
- Sign up for alerts: <http://www.athens.edu/alerts> and text Alertme to 95577

1/26 — Meet in Library, RM 215

Before the meeting, for further exploration, please peruse the International Writing Centers Association Best Article for 2008: “Taking on Turnitin: Tutors Advocating Change.” [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7Pmlx49yYP\\_Zk5veDRINUVaWWM/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7Pmlx49yYP_Zk5veDRINUVaWWM/view?usp=sharing)

- Dr. Mark Gale—Using Technology in Assessing Plagiarism: SafeAssign

2/9 — Meet in Library, RM 215

Before the meeting, for further exploration, please go to [http://learn.yale.edu/hsp/module\\_1/1\\_introduction.asp](http://learn.yale.edu/hsp/module_1/1_introduction.asp) to learn about ethical research and the history of the creation of IRBs. Please take a quiz for a module—“Informed Consent” is a good one to pick <http://learn.yale.edu/hsp/quiz.asp>. Also visit <http://www.writing.wisc.edu/pwtparp/> to see what kind of research we might do.

- Dr. Bruce Thomas—Researching at Athens State/Institutional Review Board

2/16 — Meet in Library, RM 215

Before the meeting, for further exploration, please go to <https://goo.gl/hfi8pH> and assess Microsoft’s tips for creating/delivering presentations. Also, peruse *Picturing Texts*, especially Chapter 7, and “Looking at Design with a Critical Eye” (462-63) and “Defective Equipment” (464-65)

- Dr. Mark Gale—Visual Tips & Presentations

2/24—Meet in Waters S-105

Before the Meeting, please go to...(more info TBA)

- Dr. Robert Koch—Tutoring Writers through the Writing Process: Workshopping Your Writing: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B7UcOugNluomN2tvMjJZS2FPUIE>

## Semester Training Tasks

| If You Are...        | Date Range | Task  | Written Work (Due 3/18)  |
|----------------------|------------|---|--|
| A new tutor...       | 2/1-3/18   | Complete a minimum of three observation sessions: two may be from online transcripts and one must be from a face-to-face session in the center. Take notes. | Please take notes about every shadowing experience. Then, write a one/two-page summary of your observations during your shadowing experiences. This document is very open-ended and may be informal. Below I’ve listed some content suggestions that might be helpful to your reader:<br>*a description of the project<br>*what tips/methods/big picture considerations you think the tutee gained<br>*if you saw any problem-solving skills that were new to you<br>*how you would handle a similar situation in the future |
| A returning tutor... | 2/1-3/18   | Complete a minimum of two tutoring sessions with another consultant (you will be tutored on your own work).   | Please take notes about each tutoring session. Then, write a one/two-page summary about your assessment of the session, from the client perspective. Look at the post-tutoring survey and use it to guide your reflection. Did this experience change your views on your own tutoring?   |



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Spring 2016  
T 3:30-4:30 & W 11-12  
Facilitator: Joy Bracewell, Ph.D.  
E-Mail: joy.bracewell@athens.edu  
Phone: 256-216-6670  
Office: Library, RM 121

---

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- Recognize how interpersonal dynamics are informed by identity (race, class, gender, age, sexuality, language background, etc.) and expectations;
- Identify and prioritize areas of concern in writing and communication projects;
- Apply and modify tutoring techniques to create a sense of shared goals and empathy within tutoring sessions;
- Find ways to build on your own personal aptitudes to practice tutoring approaches that work with your strengths and preferences;
- Facilitate your own growth and maturity as an individual and collaborative writer, communicator, and researcher.

## Requirements

1. Participate in the weekly seminar by attending, contributing to discussions, asking questions, and actively listening;
2. Complete the readings/viewings and projects with a high standard of quality, creativity, and integrity;
3. Use the meetings to inform your writing center praxis and bring your insights/questions/concerns about your work to the meeting.

## Evaluation

Your position as a consultant here is multi-faceted. Assessments of your work will be drawn from these crucial categories: dependability/reliability, initiative, preparation, professionalism, attitude, interpersonal skills, and overall performance. As director, my responsibilities include managing the workplace environment (physical space, technology, and atmosphere), communicating expectations, coordinating training and resources, and managing workloads.

## Materials

Ryan, L., & Zimmerelli, L. (2016). *The Bedford guide for writing tutors* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.  
Other articles & texts, TBA.

## Meetings

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| TUES. 3:30-4:30   | WED. 1:00-12:00 |
| Brittany Aldridge | Bill Bridges    |
| Jensie Britt      | Patrick Shields |

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### 3/1—Meet in Library Tech Room

Ch. 5: Helping Writers across the Curriculum—Focus on Resumes, Cover Letters, & App. Essays/Personal Statements  
Ms. Saralyn Mitchell, Dir. of Career Center

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### 3/8—Meet in Library Tech Room

Ch. 6: Tutoring in the Information Age—Focus on “Developing Advice Templates”  
Ch. 5: Helping Writers across the Curriculum—Focus on “Lab Reports”

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### 3/15—Meet in Library Tech Room

Ch. 4: The Writers You Tutor  
Disability Services: Ms. Jean Martin  
Counseling Services: Ms. Lisa Philippart

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### 3/29—Meet in Library Tech Room

Ch. 2: Inside the Tutoring Session  
Mr. Garner Ezell, Dir. of Curriculum & Instruction, Athens City Schools

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### 4/5—Meet in Library Tech Room

Ch. 6: Addressing Var. Tutoring Situations

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### 4/19—Meet in Library Tech Room

Reflection Reports/ SWCA AL & SWCA

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### 5/2 @ 2:30—Center for Lifelong Learning

Tentative time/day for end-of-semester consultant gathering

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## Announcements/Business:

3/1 — Meet in Library, RM 215

Before the meeting, for further exploration, please familiarize yourself with the Career Development Center website, including this resume workshop: <http://www.athens.edu/career-development-center/2014-15-workshops/>

- Helping Writers Across the Curriculum: Focus on Resumes, Cover Letters, & App. Essays/Personal Statements

3/8 — Meet in Library, RM 215

Before the meeting, for further exploration, please peruse *Writing in the Biological Sciences*, Chapter 7: “Laboratory Reports and Research Papers”

- Helping Writers Across the Curriculum: Focus on Science Writing

3/15 — Meet in Library, RM 215

Before the meeting, for further exploration, please peruse a few brief articles a major Writing Center journal and peer tutor newsletter: <http://goo.gl/ZYokXA> and <http://goo.gl/Z1LvIQ> and [http://sites.psu.edu/thedanglingmodifier/?page\\_id=942](http://sites.psu.edu/thedanglingmodifier/?page_id=942)

- Ms. Jean Martin, Disability Services & Ms. Lisa Philippart, Counseling Services (if available)

3/29 — Meet in Library, RM 215

Before the meeting, for further exploration, please familiarize yourself with the AVID approach to tutoring: <http://www.avid.org/what-is-avid.ashx>

- Mr. Garner Ezell, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Athens City Schools

4/5 — Meet in Library, RM 215

Before the meeting, for further exploration, please prepare an update for everyone on the status of your project.

- Consultants on Stage: Role Play

4/19 — Meet in Library, RM 215

Before the meeting, please submit your reflection reports.

- Discuss reflection reports: shadowing/tutoring observations.

### Semester Training Tasks

| If You Are...               | Date Range | Task  | Written Work (Due 3/18)  |
|-----------------------------|------------|---|--|
| <b>A new tutor...</b>       | 2/1-3/18   | Complete a minimum of three observation sessions: two may be from online transcripts and one must be from a face-to-face session in the center. Take notes. | Please take notes about every shadowing experience. Then, write a one/two-page summary of your observations during your shadowing experiences. This document is very open-ended and may be informal. Below I've listed some content suggestions that might be helpful to your reader:<br>*a description of the project<br>*what tips/methods/big picture considerations you think the tutee gained<br>*if you saw any problem-solving skills that were new to you<br>*how you would handle a similar situation in the future |
| <b>A returning tutor...</b> | 2/1-3/18   | Complete a minimum of two tutoring sessions with another consultant (you will be tutored on your own work).   | Please take notes about each tutoring session. Then, write a one/two-page summary about your assessment of the session, from the client perspective. Look at the post-tutoring survey and use it to guide your reflection. Did this experience change your views on your own tutoring?   |

**Consultant Gathering: Tentatively Scheduled for Monday, 5/2 @ 2:30 at the Center for Lifelong Learning.**

## Business and Technical Writing

### Communication: Importance, Audience Types, and Ethics

Audience is a crucial aspect of the technical writing process; therefore, it should be considered carefully. Effective communication between the writer and audience ensure proper business operation. Audience communication can be broken down into two categories:

- *Internal*. This audience consists typically of one's coworkers (superiors and subordinates). These documents rarely circulate outside of the organization.
- *External*. This audience consists of the general public or targeted population. These documents target potential customers, employees, investors, etc.

Audience communication does not end at Internal and External. One must not assume that the intended reader will be the only reader. It is possible that someone else may read a prepared document. For example, Dan may write a letter to his manager to ask for a raise. Dan's manager may send the letter to his boss for approval or rejection. In this scenario, Dan's manager is the direct audience, and his manager's boss is the indirect audience.

- *Direct*. This is your intended audience to whom you are writing.
- *Indirect*. This audience may read your document even though you did not intend them to read it. It is important to acknowledge this possibility when constructing and writing the document.

Ethical integrity is important in technical writing. Ethical writing dictates that the writer "includes all relevant information, [be honest], and is not deceptive in any way" (Bovee & Thill, 2007). Similarly, one must consider the cultural consequences of business writing. Cultures vary across the world, and the writer must be careful in word choice, expression, and conveyance of ideas. Accidentally disrespecting a partner organization or a client can lead to communication breakdown; consequently, the business will suffer.

### Genres

There are several forms of communication, or genres, in business and technical writing. The most prominent genres include:

- *Memos*. Memos are brief internal documents.
- *Letters*. Letters may be written to customers, subordinates, or supervisors.
- *E-Mail*. Electronic mail has assumed the hybrid role of memos and letters. Electronic mail is a fast and efficient way to communicate with one's audience.
- *Short Reports*. The Brief is the most common form of short report.
- *Long Reports*. Reports usually entail cause and effect analysis. Proposals, another form of long report, typically entail problem and solution analysis, usually in the form of a SWOT analysis.
  - Strengths
  - Weaknesses
  - Opportunities
  - Threats
- *Other*. Alternate forms of communication include resumes, websites, presentations and other forms of oral communication, and abstracts. Abstracts are essentially short summaries of longer prepared documents.

### **Writing with Precision**

Precision is a vital component to business writing. Precision can be broken down into four categories, each with its own importance:

- *Tone.* Tone of voice conveys emotion to the audience. Tone of voice should be selected carefully with regard to audience, purpose, and document content. Negative and positive tones of voice should be applied appropriately. When possible, maintain an objective, neutral tone of voice.
- *Length.* Most readers will lose interest if a sentence is longer than twenty-three words. The longer the document, the more likely the reader will lose interest. Never use more words than necessary to effectively and efficiently communicate a message.
- *Word Choice.* Every sentence of a document has a purpose. Likewise, every word of a sentence should contribute to that purpose. Words should accurately reflect the intentions and ideas of the sentence. Business writing makes an argument; words and sentences should be persuasive and accurate.
- *Business as a Contract.* Business writings are often legally binding and potential legal consequences should be considered when writing any document.

### **Documentation Style**

There are many different ways to document business documents. At the University of North Alabama, the American Psychological Association (APA) style is preferred. The APA style is concerned with time. Time as a factor is influential in many disciplines, especially business. All aspects of business take time; therefore, time is a critical component of business.

### **References**

Bovee, C. L., & Thill J. V. (2007). *Business communications essentials* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.



**Contents**

|                          |       |   |
|--------------------------|-------|---|
| About Style Guides       | ..... | 1 |
| Report Overview          | ..... | 1 |
| Formatting Your Document | ..... | 2 |
| Style and Grammar        | ..... | 3 |
| References               | ..... | 5 |

**About Style Guides**

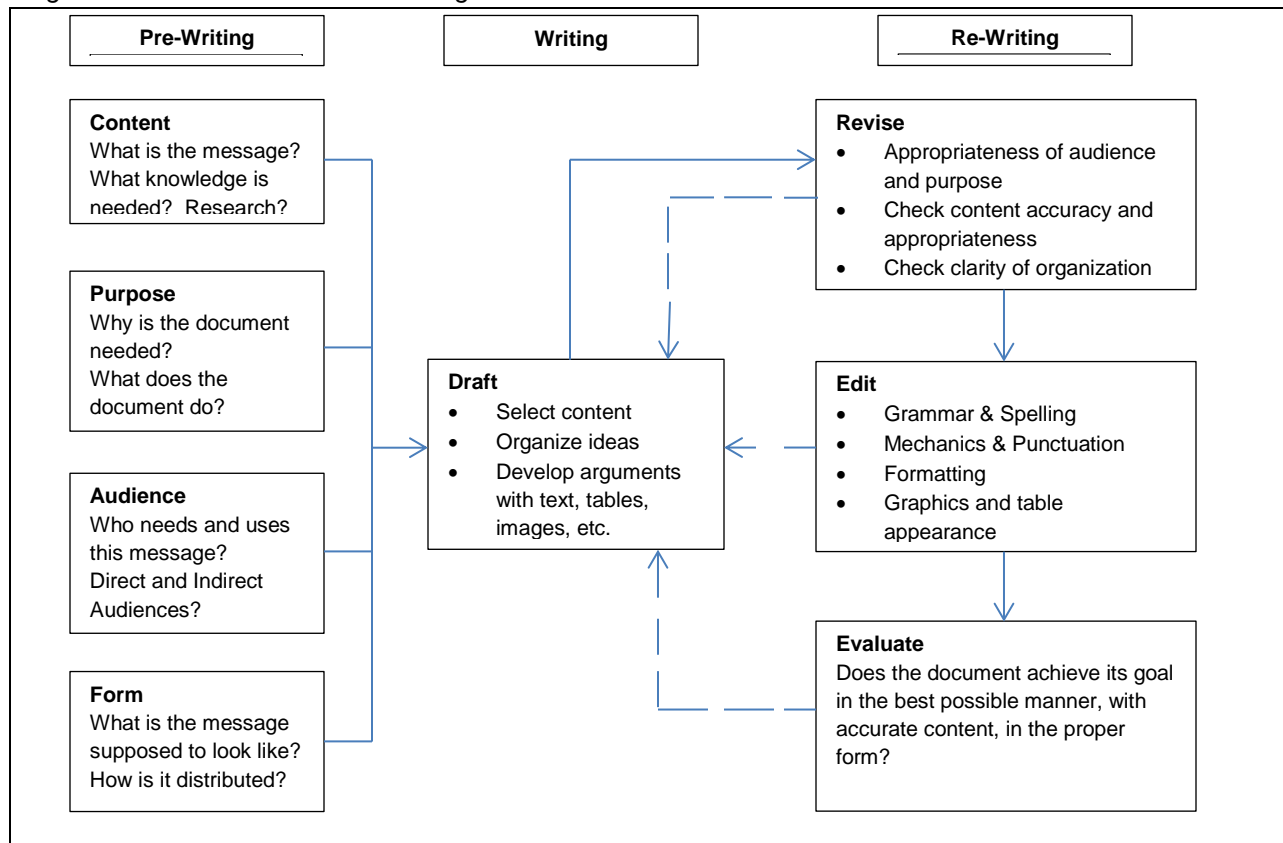
The set of guidelines contained here constitute a style guide for your course. In other words, these are expectations your reader will have for your writing. In the professional workplace, you will encounter other style guides as well; some are disciplinary, such as MLA, APA, Chicago, or ACS. Others are specific to the corporations or business who created them. Federal and state agencies will also likely have style and content expectations and guidelines for technical writers in industrial hygiene. The larger the corporation or government office, the more likely they are to have a style guide of their own. Always remember that the style of *your* workplace, and the accompanying guidelines from federal or state authorities, supersede any grammar or style lessons learned in school.

**Report Overview**

What is the process for writing a technical report?

The process is largely similar to writing any document, though perhaps more structured. Figure 1 illustrates the process, noting the depth of planning and the recursive nature of revision, editing, and evaluation.

Figure 1. Technical Document Writing Process



What are the parts of a technical report document?

Reports in general, including technical reports, have a standard form in which the content is expected to be presented. Remember that form follows function, so understanding *what* your paper will do always helps determining the *content* that should be included and *form* the report should take. Table 1 compares several types of technical reports and papers you may likely encounter in your field. A *technical report* explains how a study (design, experiment, analysis, or otherwise) was accomplished. The *experimental report* outlined below is specific to experimental activities, while the *analytical report*, like the experimental report, is simply another specific type of technical report. Finally, a *technical paper* is a post experiment document generally written for conferences and publication.

Table 1. Comparison of Report Types and Content

| Technical Report   | Experimental Report | Analytical Report        | Technical Paper      |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Opening Matter     | Opening Matter      | Opening Matter           | Opening Matter       |
| Title and Author   | Title and Author    | Title and Author         | Title and Author     |
| Table of Contents  | Abstract or Summary | Abstract or Summary      | Abstract or Summary  |
| List of Figures    |                     |                          |                      |
| List of Tables     |                     |                          |                      |
| Abstract / Summary |                     |                          |                      |
| Introduction       | Introduction        | Introduction             | Introduction         |
|                    |                     | Background               | Background           |
|                    |                     | Purpose                  |                      |
| Background         |                     |                          |                      |
| Objectives         |                     |                          |                      |
| Proposed Solutions | Purpose             |                          |                      |
| Procedures         | Procedures          | Methodology / Procedures |                      |
|                    | Basic Theory        | Limitations              |                      |
| Results            | Data & Results      | Data & Results           | Current Study        |
| Discussion         | Discussion          | Discussion               | Results & Discussion |
| Conclusions        | Conclusions         | Conclusions              | Conclusions          |
| Recommendations    | Recommendations     | Recommendations          | Recommendations      |
| References         | References          | References               | References           |
| Appendices         | Appendices          | Appendices               | Appendices           |

Notice the extensive overlap across these report types. Technical writers should know what each of these sections are, what they do, and how they are written. In addition to technical writing guides, journals in the discipline provide illustrations of how these components are written and fit together.

### Formatting Your Document

Certain tips in preparing your technical document can make it easier for your reader to follow and enjoy. Implement these tips whenever possible.

#### Formatting

- Consider multiple column or other layout changes, if more than 65 characters appear in a line. Longer lines slow the reading.
- Justify only the left hand margin. Right hand justification reduces readability.
- Break dense copy into more readable, smaller sections. Shorter paragraphs are easier to follow.
- Use white space to make the text clearer and easier to read.
- Be consistent in font type, size, spacing, margins, and other document features.

#### Headings

Headings are strategic statements or phrases that teach your reader how to navigate your document and find information fast.

- Use headings to identify major sections and / or subsections.

- Unless otherwise required, use details that make headings self-explanatory.
  - Nuclear Power Station Cooling Systems (good) vs. Plant Systems (unclear)
- Be consistent in capitalization, emphasis (bold, italics, underline), indentation, and punctuation for each *level* of heading.
- In general, headings apply to multi-paragraph sections; avoid using them for one-paragraph sections whenever possible.
- Use parallel phrasing for headings.
- Be certain to cover the range of information in a heading.
  - Nuclear Cooling Design (good) vs. Nuclear Cooling (ignores the emphasis on design)
- Do not stack headings. Always include content.
- Avoid lone headings – having only one of a heading in a section.
- Avoid referring to headings in the text (pronoun referrals).
- Avoid starting headings with articles.
- Do not use headings to lead into lists, figures, etc.
- Avoid “widow” headings (standing alone at the bottom of a page); force the heading to the top of the next page.

### Style and Grammar

When considering style and grammar, err on the side of preciseness and conciseness: say exactly what you mean, as briefly as possible. This is not a comprehensive list of all rules and guidelines, only a compilation of those tips most often needed. Consult a grammar and style handbook for more suggestions, and remember: your corporate, agency, or institutional style guide supersedes all other rules.

### Style

- After 23 words, no one is reading (unless the technical jargon or terminology of the discipline mandates longer sentences).
  - “A concentration of [chemical compound] was [specialized verb with a chemistry-specific definition]...”.
- Avoid jargon when possible.
- Avoid excessive anecdotes and evidence.
- Avoid repeating what people know.
- When using positive and negative statements, cut the negative.
- Unless it is expected in your field, avoid wording that makes the researcher sound indifferent to what is occurring.
  - “When it is assumed...” (sounds like no one has made the assumption) vs. “If...then...” (active involvement of researcher)
- Do not substitute generic terms “chemical compound A”, etc., when the name of the compound is appropriate. This will improve clarity.
- Define abbreviations and acronyms by first using the full name, then following it with a parenthetical containing the shortened form. The term may be used thereafter.
  - “The American Chemical Society (ACS)...”
- Avoid idioms, slang, and humor that can confuse non-native readers. Use global icons and terminology. (<http://www.iso.org>)

### Grammatical Structure

- Subject/agent first, then verb/action – emphasis is almost always on the subject.

- “chemicals reacted” (good) vs. “the reaction from the chemicals was...”
- Avoid nominalizations – turning verbs into nouns
  - “The presentation offered a solution...” (poor) vs. “He presented a solution...” (good)
- Reduce passive voice (is, are, was, were). In some chemical methodologies and discussions, this may not be acceptable or practical. Check for appropriateness in other sections of the document.
  - “The solution was added by the assistant” vs. “the assistant added the solution”
  - “...a solution was added...” (may not be acceptably removed)
- Avoid long compound noun phrases. Identify the noun quickly, and get to the action.
- Use sentence beginnings to connect to prior or shared knowledge.
  - “...resulted in a compound of three chemicals. This compound...”
- Use transitional or orienting words in sentence beginnings.
- Reduce wordiness by eliminating unnecessary words and converting prepositional phrases to adjectives.
  - (red in color vs. red – when is red *not* a color?)
  - “the composition of the compound” vs. “the compound composition”

### Punctuation

- Semicolons
  - Separate independent clauses that do not use coordinating conjunctions.
  - Separate independent clauses that contain conjunctive adverbs (however, hence, etc.).
  - Separate items in series that already contain commas.
- Colons
  - Introduce a word, phrase or clause that amplifies a general statement.
  - Set off a series preceded by an independent clause.
- Commas
  - Separate independent clauses that use coordinating conjunctions.
  - Set off introductory statements of four or more words
  - Set off items in sequence
  - Set off appositives and non-essential phrases and clauses
  - May be used to clarify confusing grammar.

**References**

- Alred, G. J., Brusaw, C. T., & Oliu, W. E. (2006). *Handbook of technical writing* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martins.
- Beall, H. & Trimbur, J. (2001). *A short guide to writing about chemistry* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- Dodd, J. S., Ed. (1997). *The ACS style guide: A manual for authors and editors* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington D.C.: American Chemical Society.
- Lannon, J. M. (2003). *Technical communication* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- Mathes, J. C. & Stevenson, D. W. (1976). *Designing technical reports: Writing for audiences in organizations*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Smith, N. M. (2012). Plain English at a glance. *Plain language: improving communication from the federal government to the public*. (July 11, 2000). <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/glance.cfm>
- Sorby, S. A. & Bulleit, W. M. (2006). *An engineer's guide to technical communication*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Thompson, E.T. (1979). How to write clearly. Elmsford, NY: International Paper.
- Zervaki, T. (2003). Writing in English for global audiences. *Professional Communication Society Newsletter*, 49(3), 12.



**SPRING 2016 CONSULTANT MEETING**  
***LAB REPORTS &***  
***SCIENCE WRITING***



# Science Writing



- Different disciplines require habits of thought, patterns of practice, and modes of communication
- Characteristics of *Science Writing*
  - ✦ Objective
  - ✦ Fact-based
    - organized in a logical order
    - supported by details
    - presented in a formal way
- Purpose
  - ✦ Deliver Information (not provoke agreement)
- Audience
  - ✦ Small, specialized (not general public/popular)

# Science Writing



## Scientific Method

- Asking a ?/Making an observation
- Proposing a hypothesis
- Testing the hypothesis
- Analyzing & Interpreting Data
- Communicating Results

## Lab Report

- Title/Intro
- Materials & Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- References





## Elements of the Lab Report

--Title--

--Intro--

Method/Materials

Results

Discussion

- Title: Includes keywords
  - <10 words
- Intro: Explains why the experiment is being performed
  - necessary background info (citations)
  - experimental objectives
  - hypothesis



## Elements of the Lab Report

Title

Intro

--Method/Materials--

--Results--

Discussion

- **Method/Materials: Explains (in paragraph form)**
  - what instruments, chemicals, etc. were used
  - what they were used for
  - when procedures are given in a lab handout or the text book—cite it, don't rewrite it! (The protocol was followed, as in this (citation), with these changes...)
- **Results: Shows data**
  - organized into tables w/labels & titles
  - work for calculations
  - does not include conclusions



## Elements of the Lab Report


Title

Intro

Method/Materials

--Results--

Discussion

- Results: 
  - Lists of numbers
  - Stating how's/why's/wherefore's of lack of success with experiment (too editorial/don't overstate user error)



## Elements of the Lab Report

Title

Intro

Method/Materials

Results

--Discussion--

- **Discussion:** Uses results to draw conclusions
  - brings the experiment to the original hypothesis: is it accepted or rejected?
  - identifies possible sources of error (not mistakes in calculation, etc.)
  - mentions ideas for future experimentation
  - does NOT simply rewrite the results



## Elements of the Lab Report


Title

Intro

Method/Materials

Results

Discussion

- When students come to us
    - Dr. Cline has already checked
      - ✦ Hypothesis
      - ✦ Intro
      - ✦ Data tables (there should be 2-5 and they should be cited)
    - She would like for us to make sure
      - ✦ Content is in the correct section
      - ✦ Paragraphs are well formed, with appropriate transitions
      - ✦ Discussion is complete
    - In terms of formatting
      - ✦ Dr. Cline does not require a title page
      - ✦ Strict APA format only matters for citations
- 



# Science Writing: Tips



- Words
  - Precise
  - Simple
  - Correct (Nomenclature)
- Sentences
  - Short, one main idea
  - First person
  - Active voice
  - Past tense

# Using Precise Words



- Revise the following...
  - ...Plants were kept in the cold overnight.
  - ...Reagent Y was mixed with X.
  
  - ...Plants were kept at 0° overnight.
  - ...Reagent Y and X were mixed together.
  - ...Reagent Y was mixed using X.

# Using Simple Words



- Revise the following...
  - ...We utilized UV light to induce mutations in *Arabidopsis*.
  - ...For the purpose of examining cell migration, we dissected mouse brains.
  
  - ...We used UV light to mutations in *Arabidopsis*.
  - ...To examine cell migration, we dissected mouse brains.

# Using Nomenclature Correctly



- Scientific nomenclature
  - ...Binomial nomenclature...
    - ✦ uses Latin grammatical forms (italicize)
    - ✦ names living things in two parts: *Homo sapiens*
      - 1.) genus: Capitalized, italicized
      - 2.) species: italicized
    - ✦ when written next to the common name, use parentheses  
house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
  - ...Human genes...
    - ✦ all caps & italics: *ADHW*, *HBAI*
  - ...Restriction enzymes...
    - ✦ Combination of italics & nonitalics: *Ban* HI

# Using Active Voice



- Revise the following...
  - ...Parrots were attacked by hawk B3.
  - ...Hawk B3 attacked parrots.
- **Except** in materials/methods – use passive voice when readers do not need to know who performed the action or to sound more natural
  - ...Plants were kept in the cold overnight.
  - ...Reagent Y was mixed with X.

# Science Writing: Tips



- Revise the following...
  - ...Parrots were attacked by hawk B3.
  - ...Hawk B3 attacked parrots.
  
- **Except** in materials/methods – use passive voice when readers do not need to know who performed the action or to sound more natural:
  - ...Plants were kept in the cold overnight.
  - ...Reagent Y was mixed with X.



## Elements of the Lab Report

Title

Intro

--Method/Materials--

Results

Discussion

- Method/Materials: Explains (in paragraph form)
  - what instruments, chemicals, etc. were used
  - what they were used for
  - when procedures are given in a lab handout or the text book—cite it, don't rewrite it!



# Point of View & Voice



## ○ Personal pronouns where appropriate

- ✓: “We conducted an experiment...”
- ✗: “The authors conducted an experiment....”

## ○ Active voice rather than passive voice

- ✓: “We asked participants questions.”
- ✗: “The participants have been asked questions by the researchers.”

# Materials/Methods Example



Which sentences use Active Voice & First person...?

We then placed the vials back in the vial container in random order to remove bias, and we added a drop of water once daily to each vial. Additionally, once a week, the cultures were inspected to detect any emerged adult wasps. We recorded emergence as soon as the first emerged adults were visible. After 21 days, the *Nasonia* cultures were frozen, and after 42, the *Melittobia* cultures were frozen as well. Once both species were frozen, each vial was opened and the wasp progeny were counted. We then ran two ANOVA tests, one for *Melittobia* and one for *Nasonia*, using the computer program SAS to compare the variance between and within treatments. We also used SAS to run a Tukey-Kramer test to compare the significance of the treatments in regards to each other. Lastly, we calculated the average amount of emerged progeny for each species under each treatment (Figures Two and Three).

# Materials/Methods Example



Which sentences use Active Voice & First person...?

We then placed the vials back in the vial container in random order to remove bias, and we added a drop of water once daily to each vial.

Additionally, once a week, the cultures were inspected to detect any emerged adult wasps. We recorded emergence as soon as the first emerged adults were visible. After 21 days, the *Nasonia* cultures were frozen, and after 42, the *Melittobia* cultures were frozen as well. Once both species were frozen, each vial was opened and the wasp progeny were counted. We then ran two ANOVA tests, one for *Melittobia* and one for *Nasonia*, using the computer program SAS to compare the variance between and within treatments. We also used SAS to run a Tukey-Kramer test to compare the significance of the treatments in regards to each other. Lastly, we calculated the average amount of emerged progeny for each species under each treatment (Figures Two and Three).

# Keep the Point of View Consistent



○ When you write in the first person (I, we), don't confuse your reader by switching to the second person (you) or the third person (he, she, it, they, etc.). Similarly, when using second or third person, don't shift to a different point of view. For example here's a sentence that switches person in a confusing way:

- ✦ I enrolled in a biology course this semester, and you have to complete three labs.

# *Science Writing includes Visuals*



- Characteristics of *Science Writing*
  - ✦ Objective
  - ✦ Fact-based
    - organized in a logical order
    - supported by details
    - presented in a formal way
- Purpose
  - ✦ Deliver Information (not provoke agreement)

# Visualizing Data: Tables, Figures



- Figures & Tables must be able to stand on their own
- Use Tables
  - ✦ to display precise numbers
- Use Figures (Graphs)
  - ✦ to highlight trends or relationships



## Elements of the Lab Report


Title

Intro

Method/Materials

Results

Discussion

- When students come to us 
  - Dr. Cline would like for us to make sure
    - ✦ Captions explain the legend
    - ✦ Written portions discuss data qualitatively
  - In terms of formatting
    - ✦ Dr. Cline does not require a title page
    - ✦ Strict APA format only matters for citations



# Tables & Figures: Using APA Style



- Info that does not appear in textual form must be formatted and labeled as either a **table** or a **figure**. (APA does not allow for the words *graph*, *illustration*, or *chart*.)
- Number tables and figures (e.g. Table 1, Table 2 etc.) and refer to them in your text as Table 1 or Figure 1
- Each table should have an individual title. Each word in the title should be italicized and capitalized except with, of, in, and, etc.
- All tables should be referenced in the text of the paper and in the reference list

# Tables: Using APA Style



- Place the word *Table* and the table number *above* the table, flush left. Place the title of the table (in title case), double-spaced, under the table number, flush left in italics. Double-, triple-, or quadruple-space before and after the table — just be consistent.
- Information regarding abbreviations or symbols used in a table, copyright information, and probability must be located in a note below the table.

Label tables with an Arabic numeral and provide a title. The label and title appear on separate lines above the table, flush-left and single-spaced.

Cite a source in a note below the table.

### Table 1

#### *Internet users in Europe*

| <b>Country</b> | <b>Regular Users</b> |
|----------------|----------------------|
| France         | 9 ml                 |

Note: The data are adapted from “The European Union and Russia” (2007). Retrieved from <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

# Tables: Using APA Style



Table 4

*Comparison of Boys and Girls by Height and Weight*

---

| Variable         | Height    | Weight |
|------------------|-----------|--------|
| Boys ( $n=61$ )  | 5 ft 1 in | 104 lb |
| Girls ( $n=60$ ) | 5 ft 2 in | 98 lb  |

*Note.* From “Analysis of Seventh Graders’ Hormones,” by W. Steeves, 2008, *Journal of Despair*, 98, p. 11. Copyright 2008 from the American Psychological Association.

# Figures: Using APA Style



- A figure should be
  - supplemental to the text of your paper
  - the best way to communicate the information
  - clear and engaging, rather than simply distracting
- To format: Place the word *Figure* and the figure number *under* the figure, flush left in italics. The title of the figure goes next to the number in sentence case.
- Legend: explains the symbols used in the figure, placed within the figure
- Caption: concise explanation of the figure and serves as the title

# Figures: Using APA Style

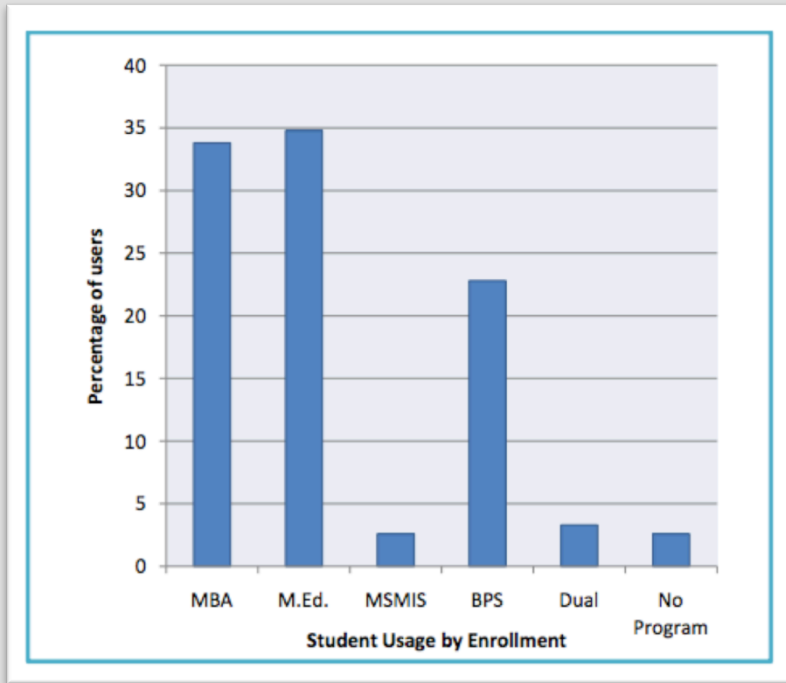


Figure 1. Student usage of the CGPS Writing Center by degree program enrollment for the year 2008-2009. Graphic shows that the majority of students were graduate students (35% , M.Ed.; 34%, MBA; 3.3%, MSMIS/MBA; 2.7%, MSMIS), followed by undergraduate BPS students (22.7%) and then by non-degree students (2.3%). Data obtained from the CGPS 2008-2009 Annual Report 2008-2009.



# Elements of the Lab Report

--Title--

--Intro--

Method/Materials

Results

Discussion

- **Title: Includes keywords**
  - <10 words
  
- **Intro: Explains why the experiment is being performed**
  - necessary background info (citations)
  - experimental objectives
  - hypothesis



# Hypothesis



- Can be tested—verifiable or falsifiable
- Not moral or ethical questions
- Neither too specific nor too general
- Prediction of consequences
- Considered valuable even if proven false

# Hypothesis: Testing & Challenging



- The degree of challenge to the hypothesis will depend on the type of problem and its importance. It can range from just seeking “a good enough” solution to a much more rigorous challenge.
- The term “challenging” may include:
  - Verification
  - Justification
  - Refutability
  - Rectification
  - Repeatability
  - Falsification
- There are two possibilities:
  - Nothing happened: the Null Hypothesis
  - Something happened: the Alternative Hypothesis

# Hypothesis: Peroxidase activity is higher in young leaves than in older leaves.



- Prediction 1: If peroxidase activity is higher in young leaves than in older leaves, we should see a greater amount of chloronaphthol converted to a purple product in the young leaves when compared to the old leaves on a tissue print.
- Prediction 2: If peroxidase activity is higher in young leaves than in older leaves, we should see a greater amount of chloronaphthol converted to a purple product in the extracted protein of young leaves than in older leaves, as measured by spectrophotometry.
- Prediction 3: If peroxidase activity is higher in young leaves than in older leaves, we should see a greater amount of purple product at the size of the peroxidase protein in young leaf samples as compared to old leaf samples when their extracted proteins are run on an SDS-PAGE and incubated with chloronaphthol.

# Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) 3rd Edition

## Student Instruction Sheet

Athens State University

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The Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) is designed to gather information about learning and study practices and attitudes. Upon submission and approval of your institution number, 60 statements will be presented that relate to your knowledge of these areas.

If you are ready to begin, locate the following URL with your web browser:

**<http://www.collegelassi.com/>**

This URL will direct you to a web page that contains directions for taking the LASSI. After you have read these directions, you must enter your school number to continue. Your school number is listed below along with your user name and password.

School Number:     **80225**  
User Name:         **aggy**  
User Password:    **hgbw**

After entering this information, the next screen to appear requires you to enter your first and last name into the spaces provided for the page to be submitted correctly. The ID and E-mail fields are optional. The next screen to appear will be the LASSI assessment.

You will be asked to respond to 60 statements. To help you decide which responses to select, we would like to explain what is meant by each option.

- By **Not at all typical of me**, we do not necessarily mean that the statement would never describe you, but that it would be true of you only in rare instances.
- By **Not very typical of me**, we mean that the statement generally would not be true of you.
- By **Somewhat typical of me**, we mean that the statement would be true of you about half of the time.
- By **Fairly typical of me**, we mean that the statement would generally be true of you.
- By **Very much typical of me**, we do not necessarily mean that the statement would always describe you, but that it would be true of you almost all the time.

After completing all the items and successfully submitting the results, a two-page report will be displayed listing your scores for each scale, together with your name, institution, date of administration, and an explanation of your results. You may print a copy of the results for your records.



**SPRING 2016 CONSULTANT MEETING**

***ROLE PLAYING***

# Scenario #1



- **Client**

- Your project is a bit of a wreck and you know it. You're counting on the tutor to help save you from a dismal grade, even though you worked really hard to get as far as you did.
- You are basically hoping for as much help as you can get so you can get the best possible grade. You are a very sweet and needy person.

- **Consultant**

- You are working with a student who only has one day before her project is due, and it needs a lot of work both partly because the student doesn't seem to understand the material and partly because there are lots of careless errors.
- You can tell she's counting on you to help save her from a dismal grade, and she is a really sweet student who you know worked really hard to get the paper as far as it is. You know that without major intervention, she is going to get an unsatisfactory grade on this assignment, but you also know you can't teach her everything she needs to do well on the assignment.

# Scenario #2



- Client
  - You need help on an assignment, but are very passive. You have not read the syllabus, you have not read the assignment sheet (you lost it, but it is posted on Blackboard. Of course you don't remember to look at Blackboard unless the tutor reminds you). You're a little stressed out, but not hostile or over-the-top.
- Consultant
  - The student wants help on an assignment, but doesn't seem to have the essential habits of a successful student. He doesn't seem to be aware of when his assignment is due, doesn't seem to be making good use of his resources (textbook, class material, Blackboard, etc.).

# Scenario #3



- Client
  - You want the tutor to just explain what the professor said in class today; it made sense to you at the time, but now that you are trying to apply it to the homework, you seem to be missing some of the concept.
- Consultant
  - You look over the student's work and can explain exactly what she is doing wrong. However, you also know there is a really good example in the book, and the professor usually uses a good example when she lectures on this topic.



# Scenario #4



- Client
  - Your roommates are rude, you're pretty sure one has been stealing from you, and you have had it! You can't even concentrate on what the tutor is talking about because you are so tired and angry. You don't mean to, but you just unload all of your housing problems on the tutor.
- Consultant
  - The student is near tears with anger and frustration about her housing situation. She is clearly too distraught to work on her schoolwork.

# Scenario #5



- Consultant
  - Think of your personality, and academic strengths and weaknesses. Consider how you feel about tutoring in different situations thus far. Construct a scenario that you envision as your worst nightmare.
  
- Answer: What do you do?
  - ?

# Session Observations

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Web/F2F: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of the project:

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Tips/methods/big picture considerations you think the client/tutee gained:

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Any new problem solving skills?

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How would you handle a similar situation, project, etc?

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Additional Notes:

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