

2008 SoCal WCA Conference Session Notes

Session #1

Don't Quote Me on That: Tutors, Writing Centers, and Academic Integrity

Marie Loggia-Kee, National University; Sarah McNay, Susan Nylander, & Mandy Taylor, CSU San Bernardino

Strategies for working with ESL/ELL students

Presenters: John Q. Davis, Pasadena City College

Graduate School Statements

Cal Tech

The Mob and You!... Effective Small Group Tutoring

Ben Davies & Micah Williams, MiraCosta College

Strategies for Tutoring Online

Erica Davis & Jaci Spencer, CSU San Marcos

Session #2

Dealing with Student & Faculty Expectations

Sheila Mandock, Brando Reynolds, & Monica Rodriguez, CSU San Marcos

Seeing Student Difficulties and Tutors' Difficulties

Presenters: Robert Cedillo, Gina Hanson, & Jeremy Vasquez, CSU San Bernardino

Negotiating the Line Between Being a Tutor and a Peer

Linda Montesinos, Evan Sanchez, Elaine Loarca, & Michael Enriquez, Mt. San Antonio College

Best Tutoring "Tricks of the Trade"

Daniel F. Thomas & Kovilanie Chainee, Moorpark College

Getting to the Source: Helping Students with Research-Based Assignments

Deborah Hobbs, MiraCosta College

Session #3

Techniques/Strategies for Working with Difficult Students

Anna Davis & Yasna Celek, Pasadena City College

Working with Unfamiliar Subjects

Adrian Sampson & Maddalena Jackson, Harvey Mudd College

Writing with a Voice

Nicole Contos, MiraCosta College

Miscellaneous: assorted, varied, and diverse

Paula Montagna & Jenn Pedro, CSU San Marcos

Session #1

Don't Quote Me on That: Tutors, Writing Centers, and Academic Integrity

Marie Loggia-Kee, National University; Sarah McNay, Susan Nylander, & Mandy Taylor, CSU San Bernardino

What is the tutor's role in diagnosing/policing/treating plagiarism?

- *Not really the tutor's role to be the "plagiarism police"
- *Don't want to be responsible for "catching" plagiarism—not Writing Center responsibility
- *Ultimately, responsibility needs to lie with the students over their papers.
- *WC doesn't give "stamp of approval"
- *Changing role of tutor to enforcer from facilitator
- *Changes space of the writing center from "safe" place to talk about writing to a policing space
- *Ask student: "Do you think you need a citation here?"
- **Difference between catching and reporting
- If we catch plagiarism, we can point it out, we aren't necessarily obligated to report
- If we catch it, we remain educators instead of enforcers
- *We don't want profs coming back to writing center and blaming tutors for plagiarism
- *Reminder of consequences for reporting plagiarism; accusing students is a big deal and can lead to serious things
- *What about the differences between students who write well but don't speak well and those who speak well but don't write "well" or fluidly?
- Some students write very fluidly but don't speak fluidly and vice versa
- *Writing center as a non-evaluative/grading space—we don't grade, we don't police for plagiarism
- *Can educate about citations and teach practices
- *We cannot completely suspend judgment in sessions, but we're not necessarily giving grades or judging students as people
- "Dangling clarifier: I'm not your professor! If in doubt, talk to your professor"
- *Plagiarism policies should be set at the top (institutionally) and that gives tutors "marching orders"

What are parameters of plagiarism and academic dishonesty at pedagogical/institutional/personal levels?

- *Institutional policies are in place but are often left to the instructors to clarify/enforce.
- *Unintentional vs. intentional plagiarism
- Unintentional: maybe not citing for summaries/paraphrasing but citing for direct quotes
- Intentional: copying full papers and turning them in as their own
- *Personal experience where a student was plagiarizing for the entire quarter but was not caught until the end
- *Plagiarism we have a zone in which to work with students

*Policies can be helped by clear policies in syllabus, especially if institutional policies are left up to professors

*reactions of unintentional and intentional plagiarists:

Unintentional: “Oh, I didn’t know.”

Intentional: “No, I did not!” adamant and immediate defense of not plagiarizing

Can you plagiarize yourself? Yes, especially if trying to turn in previous work for present class

What do you do when instructors don’t enforce their own policies?

**Advise students: Go with what professor is asking for, be advised that format might change.

*Citation practices for each major; refer student back to professor

Tutors walk fine line between professor and writing center

*Some projects have specific templates, but give professor what the prof asks for

*Definition of plagiarism/academic dishonesty has wide spectrum

Difference between allusion and plagiarism?

*copyright issues and timing

*Is it appropriating, expanding, using others’ ideas?

What is the difference between academic collaboration and academic dishonesty?

Collaboration entails joint agreement to share agency; incorporates ideas and advice and works within a range of acceptable sharing

Academic dishonesty: misleading attribution of sources; claiming a source/phrasing as their own

*Professor/student relationship: Can student use professor’s comments/words in paper?

We say yes because student and professor have clear relationship

*Tutor/student relationship: Should caution students to not use tutor’s ideas only because prof may not be aware of tutor/student relationship

What about brainstorming/seeding sessions?

**Asking questions (Rogerian method)

*Danger lies in examples we give because we don’t know what students will use

*Modeling is acceptable and helpful

*Hard to step back when students writing in “our” areas

*Point out what’s going on in texts while being careful to not take over session

*Make sure we use time wisely.

Sometimes it is better to step back and leave hands off.

Strategies for working with ESL/ELL students

Presenters: John Q. Davis, Pasadena City College

ESL student monopolizes time of the tutor and the session. This is a common problem, (helpful to focus on one area). Common problems punctuation, verb tense shifts, work from prevalent prob with the student. Cultural aspect/language, which makes difference in how the ESL student thinks. Cultural discourse—the way students learn vary.

Comparing how American students would approach a paper, differs from perhaps the

way Asian discourse pattern of learning is. I.E. Romance discourse, a lot of repetition. Discourse-- student may often go off-track.

Examples: French, Italian, Spanish culture will exhibit similar way of thinking.

Discourse patterns:

Circular pattern

Reader participation

Expectation of the student is that they know how to write in an American discourse pattern.

Outlining: strategies for ESL students to approach writing outlines—they may be afraid to outline in words if they don't write in complete sentences

It may be they are afraid to lose track of their train of thought.

Outlining is a useful tool for ESL students. Brainstorming allows the student to get their ideas out before they focus on their main idea. It's more natural way to ease them into a main idea.

Scaffolded free-writing, free writing till you can reach the main idea, also known as looping. * great with ESL students

Terminology that the ESL student may use are pointed out, we may point out what the vernacular is (?). Inherent with esl students to put down terminology which is not often used in American vernacular because of the times. (i.e. red man = to connote American Indians) they make lack the schema of the amer. Indian experiences in the united states, and they usually don't have much information on American culture because they are international students. Working to inform the int'l student may help them understand how to write, it all depends on their knowledge of the subject.

Because int'l students may not know the taboos of the American culture

Repetition: is common with romance languages like Spanish or French. They go in a circuitous manner when writing. Prompting the student to get to the point without having to go through irrelevant topics. Almost like taking original draft and trying to help them restructure to a more concise paper.

Summarizing instead of analyzing. Certain asian cultures have a different way of analyzing ideas. They are not taught to do that or speak directly, which leads to the circuitous pattern.

First and foremost, be patient. ☺

Showing them something tangible when the student is looking for you as a tutor to do almost all the thinking for them.

Some esl students don't usually adhere to mla standards...could be that professors don't explain the meaning of paraphrasing. The student has difficulty with this.

When they write thesis statements they aren't always clear, a possible technique to help them thru this is to prompt them to see if they can "argue" the topic.

"shared" ideas may mean the student doesn't see it as plagiarism, a cultural aspect seen in asian communities

The student may not realize that what they are doing is plagiarism.

Sharing vs. Stealing (as it pertains to plagiarism)

Feedback for non-native speakers vary. The more we explain, the less the student internalizes the reasons for why or why not.

Encourage them by having them demonstrate their own ideas to get them to open their mind to learning more.

Circling the mistake, or highlighting it lets the student try to figure out the mistake on their own.

You don't want to appropriate the student writing with your own words, showing them that English is idiomatic, avoid writing on their paper so that they can write it with their own words

Graduate School Statements

Cal Tech

Notes:

- Essays should be crisp and concise without being a regurgitation of the resume
- Strive to talk to students about their experiences and take notes while they're talking; then show the students what they've said and help them put it to paper
- Encourage them to support facts with creative details & anecdotes
- Show, don't tell
- Help them get specific about their desires, interests, and circumstances
- Use past experiences, even if they are about hard times, to stand out; Illustrate perseverance and determination
- Write with confidence
- Help them be as specific about their path as possible
- Find out what excites the student. Sometimes it's helpful to listen to them before you even read the paper – listen for when their tone changes and you know they're excited. Then look for that in the paper and weed out the more dry details

The Mob and You!... Effective Small Group Tutoring

Ben Davies & Micah Williams, MiraCosta College

Notes:

HOW DO STRATEGIES CHANGE

- how much time do you have

STRATEGIES

- ask the student what their concerns are. Even if they can't articulate it, asking the question helps them to focus.
- In a group, give each person a specific something to look for: i.e. topic sentence, support, etc.
- Divide the group into smaller group; example, split 4-5 people into pairs
- Divide the group based on the focus that the students want to cover
- Teach the students how to give good feedback to each other, so you don't have to read all the papers
- Give them general guidelines, then have them find those things in their own paper

Dealing with apathy - the Worry Factor

- Show them what they can do to improve their paper
- Use language that invokes a little power; “The professor will be looking for...”
- Play devil’s advocate to get them talking and interested
- Karate Kid method: learning about something without obviously learning about it, (wax on, wax off)
- Change your own attitude toward the topic, essay itself, etc.
- Talk about something that they all can relate to, like food, and relate it to what your talking about
- Rewards – candy, individual praise and encouragement
- Build a relationship with the student first – how are you feeling, how’s the class going, etc.
- Show the student that they are responsible for their own success.
- Silence is okay!

Talking More vs. Talking Less

- Structure the session with questions to generate ideas
- Let the student process the information
- Let the student with a strong grasp of a topic lead the discussion a little and teach the other students
- Help the student put things into the context of the class
- It doesn’t matter what the topic is, let the students take the lead. If you aren’t confident with the topic, have them explain it to you.
- Use the discussion to assess how much the students know about the subject
- Have the students put things up on the board, like topics to discuss, things to look for, etc
- Jump up to the board to deal with confusion or just to change the energy of the group and refocus the group, etc
- Try having the students get up and walk around the room to facilitate the writing process
- Try making up a game: jeopardy; family feud; have them compare another person’s paper to food, animals, etc.
- Don’t be afraid to try something new
- Play music

Redirection

- Ask them how the comment pertains to the assignment, the grading rubric
- Have a key word that all the students know when they are off topic
- Try not to use answers or comments that have negative connotations
- Respond to the things in the comment that are correct; you don’t have to address the things that are wrong

Strategies for Tutoring Online

Erica Davis & Jaci Spencer, CSU San Marcos

Online tutoring:

Students need to know the turn-around time

Online Writing Lab (OWL): extension of the Writing Center

Goals of online tutoring are the same as one-on-one tutoring

It can be really easy to focus on smaller/local issues (i.e. grammar)

Have students write a letter/message with their questions about their paper, specific thing they would like the tutor to look at

Acknowledge the student's questions, but also attend to what they need

**Different centers have different infrastructures of "online tutoring" (blackboard, e-mail, online chat sessions, etc.)

Staffing also affects turn-around time

**wonline (google it), live chat session for online tutoring

FEEDBACK: very similar to what we would give the students in person, except we have to type it out

Benefit is that you have a lot more time to respond, can read and reread the student's paper

Commenting on Student Essay:

Write only where the issue is seen

Use lots of "I statements"; responding as a reader

If you write in the middle of sentences, keep the comment very short; recommend put in brackets [[notes are here]]

Recommend then writing a short, 1-2 paragraph letter, following up on comments written in paper

End the letter very positively

Put responsibility on the student to make the revisions and perhaps continue to work with a tutor

What about sever grammar issues?

If it's hurting their communication and their argument, than those do need to be addressed.

Perhaps choose a paragraph and make grammatical corrections, and ask the student to follow through the rest of the paper and make the same corrections

We are focused on process, not product

Online tutoring can be a benefit, but it is important to practice restraint from fixing everything; that will not help the student

It's not about correcting a paper; it's about helping a writer

Be careful about your comments, because the tone of a sentence can not always be read online, in electronic responses; use smiley faces ☺!

Concerns: make sure that our consultants have the ability to write professionally (advice, grammar rules, etc)

Train the consultants

Exercise: commenting on student essays (within a time limit); director addresses what is appropriate and what is not appropriate

Recognize authority of your commenting on a student essay because it is in the same format as perhaps their instructor's response to their papers

How do we know what we are doing is effective?

Feedback from faculty members

Assessing value of the writing center? Make faculty members your best friends

Post guidelines for the students so they understand what the consultants do and won't do when responding to their writing; the student needs to understand that online tutoring is an extension of the writing center

Purdue OWL

Have online sources available to students (i.e. MLA, APA, and Chicago styles)

Perhaps, in guidelines, ask student to also send the prompt, or explain the prompt

Erica got training through CAPI (you can access it online)

Be really encouraging in your responses to the student's essay

Session #2

Dealing with Student & Faculty Expectations

Sheila Mandock, Brando Reynolds, & Monica Rodriguez, CSU San Marcos

Issues of own experiences with preconception of a tutor:

- Always think we are a TAs and have some input on their grade
- They think they will be labeled as remedial writer
- They think we are a copy-editors
- They think we are supposed to make their paper cohesive when it was written by several people
- We are an extra set of eyes—not an authority figure trying to make things difficult, (resistance against viewing us this way)
- Undergrad tutors are not able to work with master's theses or graduate student's work
 - If we haven't read book
 - Not the same major
 - Age discrimination

Sophomores, Freshmen, tutoring other educational levels

Solutions:

- allow consultants to feel comfortable working with the students(allow them to freely move throughout the classroom)
- establish common ground
- let them know we use the writing center too, our writing isn't perfect, share personal experiences with writing
- play dumb, have them explain—encourages involvement & student's authority
- When we do know the instructor or topic:
 - what can you tell me about this topic
 - explain even same professors have different curriculums
- Letting them know they are not 'remedial'
- encouraging teachers not to write-off students, by sending them to the writing center
- let them know what writing centers actually do—Be directive
- writing center is a vitamin, not a bandage
- encourage students to go to writing center at any time (not just when something is wrong)
- let them know their situations are common at any stage or level of writing
- Share personal experiences about own writing center experiences (being overwhelmed, having another person look at it)
- give them the tools so they can craft their own sentences
- use the "I" statements or the phrase "as a reader" to lessen authority
- compliment them when there are positive elements in their writing, make sure to highlight the positive
- encourage classmates to get feedback, even when their writing is 'good' in their eyes
- let them know it is ultimately their responsibility, they can ignore or listen to whatever suggestions we provide
- Don't use 'mean' language
- Let them know the consequences about not getting help/be blunt if need be (With difficult students)
- allow for different learning & writing styles, be aware of the way people in different majors may think, ask them about the different formats that they use
- Ask other tutors for help if you don't understand
- remember the session is about the student
- be aware of what the professor's expectation are, but don't assume authority about the professor

Seeing Student Difficulties and Tutors' Difficulties

Presenters: Robert Cedillo, Gina Hanson, & Jeremy Vasquez, CSU San Bernardino

Instead of trying to change students, ask what WE can do to change to help them. How can the tutor respond to the behavior, as opposed to attempt to change the behavior from the student?

Scenario 1:

- Student makes weekly sessions, and a majority of the session is taken with student venting to tutor. Difficulty arises from relationship with student and instructor – outside of Writing Center space. This results in some of the time being wasted on merely student problems – it is an unproductive session. What do we do? What kind of behavior should we have?
 - o Empathy? Create general connection through **active listening**.
 - o Get specific? Ask what professor tells student to work on, or completely eliminate use of word “professor” in order to keep focus on paper: “What difficulties have you had in the past?” “What type of feedback have you had on past papers?”
 - o “Hate the game, not the player.”

Scenario 2

- Student that does not want to leave when session is over. They are eager and actually great students, but how do we end these sessions without coming across as negative or mean?
 - o *Explain* that other tutors are just as capable and knowledgeable, so if they come back later, they will receive treatment that is just as effective.
 - o *Exercise **time management*** and incorporate proper tone in voice in order to show the end of the session is drawing near.
 - o *Be blunt* by saying that we have only a set amount of time to work with them at beginning of session; we have specific rules that must be followed, which forces student to prioritize subjects needed help with in order to have most helpful session.
 - o *Give “heads-up”* when we have only 5-minutes left in order to force student to focus on last, most important part of paper to work on before end of session.
 - o *Let students set the agenda*, and modify it with time allocated.

Scenario 3

- Student sees that there are no available appointments that day to be tutored. Student gets angry and demands to be seen because he/she pays college fees in order to use service. What do we do?
 - o Explain policies in order to show that with amount of students that need to be seen, it is difficult to accommodate all students that need service in one day.
 - o Encourage students to individually work on paper and take their time, and then come back the next day with a paper that is even better prepared. Show how this idea will be more educationally beneficial to them.

- Provide in-class orientations at beginning of school year in order to familiarize students and introduce them to the rules of the Writing Center, giving particular attention to freshmen classes.
- Apologize and give other alternatives to fulfill their needs.
- Be polite and be positive. ☺

Examples of difficult student behavior:

- Students challenging authority on certain subject matter.
- Students write papers that are too personal, which causes tutoring sessions to become awkward. Ask, “Would you feel comfortable sharing this with an entire class?”
- Students write papers that are not personal enough. Explain that in any paragraph, concrete details are needed to support any idea. This will make them wonder whether or not they wish to give any more personal testimony.

Negotiating the Line Between Being a Tutor and a Peer

Linda Montesinos, Evan Sanchez, Elaine Loarca, & Michael Enriquez, Mt. San Antonio College

Awkward situations

- set up boundaries
- control tutoring environment
- bring in supervisor
- acknowledge cultural differences
- return attention to session
- center on work
- keep expectations “asexual”

Key quote: “if you cant focus on the session than ill have to end the session.”

Tutoring outside of the center

Tutoring friends

- giving other opportunities to help
- follow policy
- blow off nicely
- credibility: what happens when students question your expertise?

Tutoring Friends

- offering other sources
- up sell the center
- give other tutor names for example of other to help
- setting boundaries
- effects/rules of breaking boundaries

Credibility

- recourses
- supervisors sit in a session
- capture audience
- don't be argent

Best Tutoring “Tricks of the Trade”

Daniel F. Thomas & Kovilanie Chainee, Moorpark College

Notes:

What do we mean by tricks of the trade? We all run into situations that test our mettle as teachers. How do we respond in a successful way?
How do we establish rapport?
How do we listen effectively?
How can we establish expectations?

Group One: Establishing Rapport

Two different types of consulting. Establishing rapport is different online. Smiley faces start of a session well. For in person sessions, asking questions about their days helps to set a good tone. Asking what the paper is about helps to get the student involved in the tutoring process.

Asking people where they are from is helpful for understanding the person and their needs.

Tone is very important because being too friendly can disrupt the student/tutor relationship.

Never underestimate the power of free candy.

Active listening is a very useful tool for foreign students.

It is important to be professional and have faith in our abilities. We must also be honest about what we do not know. This also teaches the student good study habits.

Be sensitive to body language. Take a student into a private room if the student is feeling self conscious.

Group Two: Effective Listening.

Ask lots of questions.

If a student wants the tutor to do all the work, give the student a pen and encourage them to do the writing.

Have them read the papers out loud. This allows them to catch their own mistakes.

Positive feedback that is relevant to the session is important. When you point out what is good about the paper, you can also point out some things that need improvement.

Mirroring. If something is unclear repeat what you think they are saying and ask them if you understand.

Ask open ended questions about subjects that you do not know much about.

The more the student speaks the better the session. Some ESL learners need more explanation or examples.

Group Three: Clarifying Expectations.

Requests for editing can be turned around so that the student learns how to edit his or her own paper.

It is important to ask if the students have read their textbook or asked their teachers question so that we are not put in the place of being the teacher.

If the students have not read the chapter, we can teach them study skills for reading the chapter and taking notes etc.

Having a list of professional proofreaders is a useful resource for people who want 50 pages edited.

Ask what the student means when he or she says “proofread my paper.”

Sometimes students just want someone to brainstorm with.

Remind the students that we are still learning. We bring our paper to the tutors too.

Remind them that it takes time to revise a paper and ask them to come in earlier next time.

Library orientations are very useful for establishing expectations. They give the students a heads up about how the tutoring center works.

Communicating the goals and the limitations of the centers to the teachers is also helpful.

Visiting the classes to let the students know what the tutoring center does also helps to establish expectations.

Getting to the Source: Helping Students with Research-Based Assignments

Deborah Hobbs, MiraCosta College

HOW TO AVOID HELPING TOO MUCH

- Ask more questions to get the student talking about the subject: what they know, what they want to learn about the subject
- Be the scribe for the student and recite back what they said, so they learn what they know, and teach them this is something they could do on their own to generate ideas

INTERNET ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

- Show them other methods of getting their research: interviews, public and college libraries, etc.
- Remind them that the internet isn't always the easiest: 10 20-page articles vs. a 2-page print source.
- Show them where to locate the reference librarian and tell them how that person can help them with the research
- Regarding Wikipediis – look at the references, not the information on the page,
- Show them that websites with .edu and .gov websites are good.
- Show them the online databases and how to limit the results to just peer-reviewed sources. Try walking them through an example of how to use the database.
- Create handouts that walk students through the process of setting up an MLA-formatted document
- Have them open a word document while doing their internet research, and show them how to copy and paste the web addresses into the word document to help them keep track of their research and get them ready for the “works cited page”
- Have the student color code things when they cut and paste things from the internet, so they can keep track of what comes from which sources and so they know what they need to cite. Tell them to leave these things in their assigned colors until all the citations are done and the paper is finished.
- Show them how to put in multiple terms into the search engine to help them find more articles that are really what they want (i.e. limit the results)

USING THE SOURCES – INTEGRATION ISSUES

- Avoid the Frankenstein paper
- Use transitional phrases to help with flow and integration of the research
- Have the student color, like with a crayon, marker, or highlighter, the research in their paper to see how much of their paper is research and how much is their own thoughts

FILLER PAPERS – GETTING THEM TO DO THE RESEARCH EARLIER

- Invite them to come back earlier for the next paper to show them how to do the research first after the brainstorming
- Challenge the students argument to help them refine the topic so that they can find more relevant support for their argument

Noodletools.com – go to express bib, it helps with the formatting the paper, citations, etc.
Citeknight – citation help

Session #3

Techniques/Strategies for Working with Difficult Students

Anna Davis & Yasna Celek, Pasadena City College

Notes:

16 participants.

Intro: We have all worked with so-called difficult students.

What is a difficult student? Resistant student, violent students, etc.

Some people believe that they are above the level of English into which they have been placed. These students do not want to do any of the assigned work. We can have a discussion with the student and try to discover areas where he/she needs improvement.

What about the students who remain resistant?

Refer to the dean or other appropriate authority figure. Attempt to customize the curriculum for the student to encourage active participation.

Stalkers or angry students? Students who want to monopolize a tutor—viz. “She’s MY tutor!”

ESL students sometimes become comfortable with a given tutor. Tutors need to “break up” with a student sometimes. One participant suggests giving them “the talk.”

Oceanside has a unique problem with returning soldiers suffering from PTSD. Talk to the student. He/she may want help and not even realize it. Offer a referral to the appropriate agency.

Although not expressly the purpose of a writing center tutor, counseling seems to be part of the job.

Pointing out student mistakes on papers: Students become invested in their writing and often resist suggestions for revision. Suggest that the student discuss the matter with the professor; alternatively, the student can be asked to explain how a part of his/her paper supports the paper’s thesis.

Some students become too comfortable in the Writing Center and see it as a hangout where they can take off their shoes, make loud/rude remarks, and disturb the operation of the center.

Students with special needs/issues may be registered with the disabled student services on campus. Try checking with the appropriate office on campus to see if the student has extra support available to him or her.

Sexual harassment: recommend another tutor, suggest that the student focus, intervene if necessary. We work in a writing center, not a dating service. Try to keep the student focused on his/her work. If not possible, tell the student that he/she needs to see a different tutor and report to campus police if the problem becomes unsafe or extremely uncomfortable. Maintain personal space.

What if we encounter a student who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol? Report the student to the writing center coordinator or to the campus police.

Safety comes first at all times! Do not risk your safety to salvage a tutoring session that goes south. Call the campus police if you even suspect that you are in danger.

Gender tends to come up in a typical writing center session, so use this as an opportunity to explain or discuss acceptable behavior.

Control the tutoring session. You are not in the writing center to edit papers; you are there to help the student improve his or her own writing. Agree upon the direction of the session at the beginning and keep on track.

Keep at it, and even the so-called trouble student can be turned around. Maintain a positive attitude.

Working with Unfamiliar Subjects

Adrian Sampson & Maddalena Jackson, Harvey Mudd College

Notes:

Examples: Biology, philosophy, history of women's liberation

Common troubles: Being appropriate, not understanding technical terms, restraining personal disagreement

Solutions?: Focusing on arguments, break down argument *logically* instead of morally

-It's tough to ask someone writing a paper on an unfamiliar topic to make their writing understandable to a general public, especially when they're advanced in their area

-Talk to professor! (client or consultant)

-Ask: what is the purpose of this paper? Start with the idea, and have the student fill in the technical specifics.

-If students are unsure whether explanation is necessary, it most likely is.

-Be weary of this, it may indicate a misconception on the student's behalf.

Personal and Political Differences

-They can be helpful! Offer counterarguments by playing Devil's Advocate

-Allows students to see weak points of their own argument

- Helps students to view their evidence in a different light
- They can be harmful! Extreme cases? How to deal?
 - Make sure students are aware of readers' beliefs—it's a delicate situation
 - If students feel under personal attack in their environment, their arguments may be a bit too passionate
 - Make sure that they are aware of this possibility!
 - Distance yourself...it's easy to get caught up in student's argument.
 - Ask students: what are they trying to accomplish with this paper?
 - Make sure that they are aware of their audience.
 - Make sure that they know whether their topic is uncomfortable or not.
 - How much information do you give about yourself to the student?
 - It's strange if you self-identify with what the student is attacking.
 - If you're not comfortable with revealing your standpoint, let them know that you'd be biased and find another tutor for them.
 - Help students to avoid using offensive language...be aware that it may be subconscious.
 - Try to focus on helping the student...remove yourself from the argument as much as possible.

Technical Subjects!

- How to deal?
 - Try to conform to standards of subject on your own
 - Treat the student as an expert on the subject at hand
 - Ensure logical flow and clarity of argument
 - Ask the student: If someone unfamiliar with discipline were to read your paper, would they understand it on a basic level?
 - If students don't understand the concepts that they are discussing in their writing, learn more about the concepts together.
 - What about lab reports/other expositions?
 - Think of them as arguments! This technique works in the opposite way with science-oriented students.

Creative Writing!

- The less you know, the better! Reader feedback is golden. What's clear, and what's not?
- The other side of the argument: Where's the evidence?
- Find out what they want from you as a reader.

Writing with a Voice

Nicole Contos, MiraCosta College

What is voice?

- Academic voice vs. speaking voice

- Research voice vs. Personal narrative voice

General Ideas and Strategies

- Be aware of the reader. Excite or involve the reader without using the slang of everyday language.
- Help the student remember that the reader is the professor, and the student wants the paper to stand out.
- Help them find new words; thesaurus, etc.
- Have them say what they want to say out loud and then try to write down those ideas
- Let the students be themselves; have them quote their thoughts in their paper.
- Find a place where the student uses their unique voice and show them how to put that voice in the beginning of the paper and throughout the essay as a whole.
- Ask questions that help the student personally identify with the subject.
- Encourage the student to put their voice and opinion into their writing. Tell them that it is okay, if not expected, for them to include their own thoughts
- Let them know the difference between too much voice and not enough, what is appropriate and what is not.
- Ask the student what their educational background is and help them figure out what is acceptable/expected in college/university
- Ask the student why you should read their paper, have them defend their perspective
- Ask them “reader response” type questions to generate discussion about their opinion
- Ask critical questions to help the student refine their true opinion
- Help the student make connections with the outside world: text messaging, blogs, music, etc.

Identifying the Voice

- Use examples to help the students see some of the ways that voice is evident; example – a novelist that doesn’t use contractions
- Show them examples of sarcasm, irony, or words that cause emotion based on a historical events or culture.
- Read the original material with the students to help them identify the voice in an article, short story, or poem.
- If the student uses humor, ask them if it was intentional and find other places where more humor could be used.

Research Papers

- Paragraphs with quotations should have as much original thought as quotation
- Teach students to use quotes only when necessary.
- When in doubt, ask what the professor has said about how much research should be in the paper.

Speaking Voice vs. What’s on the Page

- Read the paper out loud, either you or the student

- Ask the student what they think is the difference between what they have written verses how they speak
- Play the devil's advocate; don't be afraid to challenge the writer's opinion to help them make it stronger
- Don't be afraid to push the students a little toward using a variety of words, start using a variety of sentence structures, etc.
- Help the student distinguish between their own opinion and that of the general public

Miscellaneous: assorted, varied, and diverse

Paula Montagna & Jenn Pedro, CSU San Marcos

Notes:

Meet the needs of the attendees.

It only needs to suggestions. How our writing center functions compared to others.

- They have to be enrolled at the classes (at least one)
- Students dictate the sessions.

Chaffey College

- They have created a structure that creates appointments for 30 min.
- They have campus activities, workshops, and appointments.
- They have certain activities that when complete they can have a tutor interact with the students.
- They have a faculty tutor for the workshops, and they are usually part time.
- Students can be tutors
- Apprentice students create study groups. Ie.(small groups, with a max of 6)
- An hour long like a lab function.
- They can focus on certain subjects with certain specializations ie. (1 on 1)
- They have walk-ins, and it can booked for a whole day with any class they can get at the college.
- You must question them for any thing that is still out in the open (not concrete).
 - You can't cover anything in just one session.
 - halitosis and bad smells.
 - sit on other side to be polite.
 - keep some gums or something on you "Do you want a breath mint?")
 - cigarette smoke, ethnic food, perfume
 - let them know if you have an allergic reaction, or something else of importance.
 - what if they are sick with a contagious germ?
 - Is it worth it to keep on going if you are really sick?
 - what is acceptable when they are sick? (sitting close or just keeping your distance)
 - Individualism or collectivism?
- Treating other in a un-polite manner.

- The fac. Tutor can take care of the situation instead of you. (911, or just get security)
- As another tutor if you are unsure of what to do.
- Document and write down what has happened in the incidents.
- What do you do if the tutees don't pick up on signs of non-interest.
- What do you do when they have just one more question?
 - Make another reschedule
 - ESL students?, Sensitivity to their culture?
 - Review what they went over.
 - What are the issues we want to concentrate on.
 - Be firm on the subject, (Be polite), Tell them to e-mail the professor
 - have some one else rescue you from the session. (breaking the rapport)
 - Tell them about stuff that they have accomplished in the session.
 - Have some review at the end of the session.
 - A review sheet if the professor requests it.
 - Keep record of what is covered in the session (carbon copy, list, ect.)
 - class system maybe used or broken
- Multit-culture bias
 - What do you do when they go against what your view is?
 - It is the opinion of the student
 - ESL has to translate, and then write down what they meant.
 - Make sure it covers what the professor designed it for.
 - make sure the citations are acceptable.
 - Look out for plagiarism.
 - Talk to them honestly about what seems to be the problem.
 - Make sure they know who will be reading the paper, and/or what their tone is.
 - Keep yourself neutral on the matter (phrase your position as one of questions)
 - Keep it in "They form".