Spring Hours

Monday through Friday
10am - 5pm
Walk-ins Welcome

At the College Writing Center, we provide a welcoming, quiet environment where students can engage in all aspects of the writing process. Our trained peer tutors work with students from all majors, at any level, on any form of writing.

Free assistance for all students

- Brainstorming
- Structure
- Flow
- Clarity
- Research
- Reader Response
- Citation
- Editing
- Revising
- Term Papers
- Cover Letters
- Essays
- Creative Work
- Résumés
- Grad School Applications

Stop by
Carson 106

Give us a call
315-267-3059

Email
cwc@potsdam.edu
Jackie
Maybe this doesn’t qualify as advice, but I consider my experience in Dr. Alan Steinberg’s Classical Heritage class (LITR 371) some of the most valuable writing training I have received at SUNY Potsdam. This course required a few major writing assignments, which each involved several heuristic steps. By the time we had to start thinking about a big assignment, we already responded at length to related prompts. This process and its setup allowed our final pieces to be well thought out and thoroughly understood based on previous discovery, debate, and experimentation with the material. Because of the success that came of this process for me, I have continued to break up my assignments in very small parts over a long period of time since it has allowed me to have a better grasp of the content and an easier time writing about it. Some of my best writing has come out of this process.

Rocio
Don’t believe in writer’s block. It’s a negative creation of our lazy self-conscience.

Brenna
Start your papers as early as possible. The more time you have to dedicate to the paper, the less stress there is in the end. Once your paper is “finished,” read, re-read, and re-re-read with a colored pen in your hand. The last time you read it, read it out loud.

Bernard
It’s hard to hone in on the best advice that has been given to me when it comes to writing in college, especially as an English Literature major where the majority of my classes require lengthy and intricate research and analytical response papers. However, writing in a scholarly manner with both thorough and competent detail was counseled to me most significantly by a syllabus that was distributed in a course taught by Dr. Doran in my second year here at SUNY Potsdam. Many items from this syllabus stuck with me and continue to stick as I progress in my academic endeavors:

• A quotation must be part of one of your sentences. Do not just drop a quotation into a paragraph.

Shaneah
Write your essay; don’t speak your essay.

• People are “who,” not “that.” E.g., “The girl who threw the ball;” not “the girl that threw the ball.”
• Do not end paragraphs with quotations. Quotations are not self-evident and require analysis.
• Do not start sentences with “this” or “this is” alone. You need a referent for “this” within the same sentence. Usually, “this” by itself would refer back to an earlier noun/referent. When you put it at the beginning of the sentence, you create possible confusion: which of the preceding nouns do you mean?

Best writing advice I’ve ever had? Always keep writing.
It’s probably not exactly what you were looking for, but it’s certainly the best. (Neil)
Next month, seven of our tutors will travel to St. John’s University in Queens to deliver a workshop at the 28th Annual Conference of the Northeast Writing Centers Association. Check out this excerpt from our proposal.

Writing Center Rhetoric in the Late Age of Print

We begin by noting the extent to which our writing center’s brochures, bookmarks, posters, orientation session scripts, training manual, and website place before clients negative messages (i.e. all writers struggle; we are not a grammar shop; we do not write papers for students; we do not correct every error.) Following Muriel Harris (2010), we agree that we need more positive messages to capture and sustain clients’ attention, particularly in the new media climate.

To generate such messages, we examine omissions and silences within our writing center rhetoric. What does our center do that is not represented in the visual/verbal rhetoric on display? How might reference to some of the following help our rhetoric to resonate with clients who are searching for more positive messages: ESL tutoring, GLBTAAQ Safe Space training, digital media work?

We then create a rhetorical artifact for our writing center that takes an element from the above examination and works it into a more positive design. We display the “before and after” in our own writing center before the conference in order to generate conversation, and we lead workshop participants to engage our design rationale by posing a series of questions for discussion.

In the second half of the workshop, we showcase a variety underrepresented new media forms that are already at work within our writing center. Through a series of still images with narration, we display a traditional, print-focused tutoring session and synchronously show the ways in which new media is implicated therein. We demonstrate how the new media (text messaging, Facebook, web-based resources, apps) swirl about even the most pencil-and-paper of activities.

We turn our attention, finally, to writing center praxis. How would one tutor a website, for example? Using a sample assignment-driven, student-generated web text, we address the following questions:

- What tutoring principles stay the same when working with “old” and “new” media? What kinds of questions do we still need to ask?
- What new knowledge and skills do we need if we are to work effectively with new media?
- How might the presence of new media in writing centers change our rhetoric, tutoring practices, tutor training, and recruitment/retention of clients?

Want to work in the College Writing Center? We’re hiring a work-study student for Fall.

One of our wonderful work-study students is graduating, so the CWC is now seeking a new staff member to work our Front Desk, staring Fall 2012.

The staff member will greet clients, use a web-based calendar (Meeting Maker) to schedule appointments, answer the telephone, and perform highly important data entry tasks. People skills a must; previous knowledge of Excel beneficial.

To apply, email cwc@potsdam.edu with a résumé and brief statement of interest. Thanks!

http://www.potsdam.edu/support/cwc

Dr. Karen Springsteen
Interim Director of the College Writing Center
Assistant Professor, Department of English and Communication

117 Morey Hall / 315-267-4877 / springkl@potsdam.edu