

THE POTSDAM COLLEGE WRITING CENTER STAFF HANDBOOK

Fall 2014

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Director: Dr. Jennifer Mitchell, mitchejk

Assistant Director: Bethany Fobare, fobarebl

Shift Leaders: Leia Depeche, Lyndi Scott, Steph Hall

Shared Secretary: Ricky Bonner-Murray

Supervising Administrator: Dr. Gerald Ratliff, Division of Academic Affairs

The Potsdam College Writing Center

Philosophy and Tutoring Techniques

We seek to help writers improve over the long-term, not just to help “fix” one paper (paraphrased from Stephen North, “The Idea of a Writing Center”). Writers might want the answers they need to improve one paper. But as we work on that single piece – preparing the writer to keep working on it -- we also try to help the writer learn something new about revising. We seek to learn from the writer, too, about her ideas, her strategies, her questions, and her history. See International Writing Centers Association “Resources” page.

Tutor’s Responsibilities:

- Tutors are available to consult with any writer in drafting and revising any writing.
- We believe that all writers, at all levels, need to conference with good readers about their writing: tutoring in the College Writing Center is not remedial.
- Tutors enter into a respectful dialogue with writers, in a kind and patient tone.
- The tutor provides an intelligent audience by asking stimulating questions.
- The tutors can share what they know about academic writing (argument, citation, tone, assignment) in ways that support what the writer is working on. Tutors can explain the conventions of standard English and help writers generate ideas while avoiding “fixing” the paper for them.
- Peer tutors are not, and do not need to be, experts. They can assist writers in the use of handbooks and other references, and provide a valuable audience. When a tutor isn’t sure, **they try find out** for the clients and refer them to other resources.

Tutee’s Responsibilities:

- The writer, not the tutor, owns the work and the ideas. The writer should identify their concerns, questions, and goals for each session. The tutor should not do more work than the writer. Ultimately the writer makes decisions about how to improve their text.
- They should bring all materials pertaining to the assignment with them to their tutoring session such as assignment directions, books, and what they have written.

Goals of the CWC The CWC seeks to provide:

- Writing assistance for student writers in all academic areas
- Writing resources, including computers, printers, and reference materials
- Assistance for faculty across the curriculum, through CWC orientations, referrals, consultations, and small group work in classrooms.
- Connections between our services and other academic support services.

CWC Staff and Tutors

Some of the tutors are paid employees with training and experience. They may be joined in a session by students in COMP 406 Peer Tutoring Practicum and tutoring internships. Some are CWC senior staff or student/faculty volunteers. All are interested in writing and in working with writers.

Peer Review (or) Writers need audience

by Eudora Watson, CWC Assistant Director 2001-02 and 2003-04

The reader's role is to provide an *interested, responding* audience

Communicate your understanding of the text

Mirror the text back to the writer. This writing is trying to get some ideas across - the writer needs to know - will a reader get the idea? Take notes that outline how you follow the main points. Let the writer know what ideas are coming across.

"I think you are saying _____"

"Are you saying _____?"

"As I read it, your thesis seems to be _____"

(BTW - a crucial understanding of this type of writing is - does it meet the requirements of the assignment? Let the writer know if you don't see a required element.)

Communicate your experience of the text

Many times a writer knows something is a little 'off' but can't pinpoint the problem because she is so familiar with the text. Here's where your help is invaluable. You are communicating to the writer your experience of the text. Do you get lost? Where? Can you keep track of whose ideas these are? Are there gaps you have to jump? Think of it as a path the writer has set down for you - how is that path? Are there places you have to guess where you are supposed to be? Do you get a sense of where this piece is going?

Communicate what works well for you

Comment on phrases, sentences, passages that carry meaning clearly, that are enjoyable to read, that really help you understand, that pull ideas together for you, that present ideas in a way that is new to you, that make you want to read more. Part of what the writer needs is to know what works.

Writer's role - ownership of work and ideas

Reader's role - sounding board

A Tentative Plan for a Tutoring Session

(Adapted in part from The Allyn Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring, Chapter Two)

Welcome the writer and introduce yourselves. Gold/blue cards and tutee feedback. Explain how we work.

Start with questions

“What was the assignment?”

“What is your main point?” (these are better terms than “thesis”)

“What concerns you, or what do you want me to pay careful attention to?”

Writer reads aloud and tutor takes notes, or tutor reads a longer text.

“You said you were concerned about [x], so let’s look more closely at that.”

“Now that you hear it aloud, what do you want to do with it next?”

“This is what I heard you saying. Is that what you wanted me to get out of it?”

Higher-order concerns

Fulfilling the assignment. Thinking, analysis, support, and clarity.

Help the writer make choices, including about their plans for revision.

Later-order concerns

Words and sentences convey meaning, so discuss them to explore ideas and intentions. Talk it through. Invite the writer to suggest a revision, and record it. Teach a strategy, share a handout.

Error analysis:

- “Do you see an error in this sentence?” – let the writer correct it, if possible
- “The problem is with ...”
- explain the rule and have the writer apply it next time

Planning for future work

Writer can state main goals and next steps, and write them down. Remind writer of CWC follow-up, evening hours, and email feedback.

Closing

Take an extra five minutes for writer to clarify what has been achieved and what’s next. Blue card: ask the writer to help you write the summary of what you did in the session. Say goodbye, enjoyed working with you, see you again, let me know how it turns out, etc.

CWC Partners and New Initiatives, Fall 2014

Sun	Mon	Tu	Wed	Th	Fri
	CWC 10-5	CWC 10-5	CWC 10-5	CWC 10-5	CWC 10-2
	EOP 3-6	EOP 4-6	EOP 3-6		
	ASL 7-9	ASL 7-9	ASL 7-9	ASL 7-9	

Warmly welcome each one of this fall's wonderful Practicum students: George, Lennix, Ricardo, Steven, Haley, Tahler, Julia, Kevin, Penelope, Janet, Aubree, Jocelyn, Daniel, and Sarafina.

Note to Graduate Assistants: If you have any trouble at all processing your financial aid or tuition waiver, please contact the CWC director, the director of Graduate Studies, and the director of Student Accounts immediately.

And new receptionists: Lina, Angelo, Alexis, and Mariam.

FYSS: Tutors have contributed to a new orientation plan. Orientations will last 50 minutes, but FYSS class might linger for 25 more minutes with their instructor. This will be noisy at times, but there's no avoiding it. Tutoring will continue in Writery.

Second Language/Bilingual Writers:

- Korean Initiative: down to 1 student.
- **We're reaching out to bilingual undergrads. Welcome them, listen to them, and help them use their oral fluency to steadily improve their academic writing skills.**
- **See new handout on working with Spanish-speaking writers.**

Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)

EOP/CWC satellite hours Mon. through Wed. 3-6pm. First-year EOP students are required to go there once a month, but also encouraged to come to Carson for as many as 12 appointments per semester.

Academic Support Office tutoring center in Sisson 106

Tim Morse is Academic Support Coordinator for lab in Sisson 106. CWC Tutors Adriana and Leia will work there M-Th 7-9pm. We'll need someone new in spring. See special Meeting Maker to schedule clients.

CWC Email Feedback Program

Dedicated tutors will compose feedback on CWC computers. This is NOT equivalent to a session! Clients must complete an enrollment session to learn our guidelines, and then email their work with description to cwcfeedback@potsgdam.edu. Bethany assigns email sessions in Meeting Maker. Read and follow guidelines for tutors on website under e-mail feedback

Library

Library's Research Center may host extended research consultations by day and peer research support in the evenings.

Continued on next page

Plagiarism Referrals

We continue our program for plagiarism referrals from Student Conduct and Community Standards. Schedule clients with Bethany, Lyndi, Leia, or Josh. See plan at the end of this handbook.

Courses/Majors

- **Workshop requests:** all faculty requests must come to the director. You can take down details and send them to me immediately, and I'll follow up.
- **Facilitate peer response groups** in Hinckley's Comparative Politics, Smith's US History, and Collen's Dance History.
- **STP:** Sustained Tutoring Program for Education and Community Health majors.

Refer our Clients to Helpful resources!

- **Counseling Center x2330: depression, test anxiety, serious relationship issues**
- **Wellness Advocates: stress, trouble coping, social relationship issues. From their website:**
 - Call (315) 261-8873 between 4:30 p.m. and 8 a.m. while classes are in session.
 - The WAs will offer to meet you someplace open, yet private on campus.
 - Everything spoken remains confidential under the Counseling Center guidelines.

Reachout Hotline: support, crisis, resource information 265-2422

- **Library:** research assistance of all kinds! Help with citations and technology
- **Student Success Center:** advising questions, withdrawal/readmission, late add
- **Academic Support Lab:** group tutoring for specific classes Google Potsdam group tutoring; help from Tim with time management and study skills

CWC Professional Development Program

Fall 2014

Summary

1. Two mandatory staff orientations
2. Complete tutorials in citation and editing
3. One mandatory midterm staff meeting
4. Be observed
5. Schedule and complete an assessment meeting in early spring
6. Be tutored

Mandatory, paid staff development:

1. You will be partially paid for two **staff orientations** in first and second week – 2 hours paid, total. Log one hour per orientation on time sheet. If you can't attend, please meet Bethany on a M, T, or W 12-4pm.
2. Reread tutorials in Paraphrasing, MLA, and APA, as well as Self-Editing Guide. Pass quiz on CWC Moodle page between October 1 and 24.
3. You will be paid once for a **full staff meeting** after midterm (Fri., Oct. 24 at 2pm).

Observation and evaluation, without pay:

4. Schedule Director, Asst. Director, a Grad Assistant or a senior tutor to **observe** you and write a description. Aim to complete these observations before Thanksgiving.
5. Your **individual assessment meetings** in early spring with Director will not be paid.
6. We encourage you to **be tutored** every semester. Just make an appointment. Walk an hour in a client's shoes. Tutors have found that this is the best way to grow and improve.

Valuable professional links: WPA statement on plagiarism wpacouncil.org/node/9

International Writing Centers Association: writingcenters.org

Tutors' blog: <http://www.peercentered.org/>

Journals: <http://praxis.uwc.utexas.edu/index.php/praxis> ,
<http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/wcjournal/search.cfm>

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
10am	Desk Leia Allison Shantel	Desk Lina Lyndi	Desk Leia Allison	Desk Lyndi	Desk Angelo Josh Leia Allison
11am	Desk Angelo Leia Josh Allison	Desk Lina Lyndi Steph H	Desk Angelo Leia Josh Steph H	Desk Lyndi Steph H	Desk Angelo Josh Leia
Noon	Desk Bethany Josh Allison [Ellen]	Desk Lina Lyndi Steph Bethany	Desk Angelo Steph H Josh Bethany	Desk Steph H Lyndi Shantel 12:30- 1:30	Desk Josh Leia Paul
1pm	Desk Alexis Lyndi Kevin Josh Bethany Steph S	Desk Steph H Paul H Lyndi S. Bethany	Desk Alexis Kevin Shantel Steph Hall xBethany	Desk Steph H Lyndi Paul	Desk Alexis Adriana Kevin Steph
2pm	Desk Lina Kevin Lyndi Steph Tina Bethany	Desk Bethany	Desk Lina Kevin Paul Steph K Bethany	Desk Maria m	Desk Alexis Adriana Kevin Steph K
3pm	Desk Steph S Lyndi Steph K Tina Bethany EOP Steph H. Sam	Desk Bethany	Desk Lina Paul H Bethany Steph K EOP Shantel	Desk Mariam	Desk Steph S Adriana. Steph K
4pm	Desk Steph S Steph K Paul EOP Stephanie H. Sam	Desk Angelo Leia [Ellen] EOP Sam	Desk Steph K Paul EOP Shantel	Desk Leia [Ellen]	'closed' Adriana, Stephanie S. Steph K
5pm	Desk Steph S Lyndi Allison EOP Stephanie H. Sam	Leia Lyndi EOP Sam	 EOP Sam	Leia Lyndi	AS OF 9/4/14
7-9 Sisson	Adriana	Adriana	Leia	Leia	

CWC Staff Strengths as of 9/4/14

Fall 2014 – 12 tutors, 4 desk staff, and 14 practicum students

Tutor Name	Major(s)	Specialization(s) or strengths	Grad date
Bethany Fobare, Assistant Director	English and Comm		
Leia Depeche STP Tutor	Theater Education	Spanish English Grammar Sustained Tutoring	Student Teaching Spring 20
Lyndi Scott STP Tutor	Creative Writing Major History Minor	APA & MLA Citation Composition Comm Health Sustained Tutoring	Graduates in Fall 2014
Steph Hall * EOP Tutor	Political Science Human Services	APA Citation AAA Citation	Graduates Spring 2015
Josh Eassa* STP Tutor	English Education	MLA Citation Sustained Tutoring	Graduates Spring 2016
Sam Lucas* EOP Tutor	Biology		Graduates Spring 2015
Steph Stassi	Biology	Biology Scientific Writing Research Writing	Graduates in Fall 2014
Tina Wing*	Early Childhood Education	Speeches Creative Writing English/Literature	Graduate in Spring 2015
Shantel Clothier*	Sociology	Speeches APA Citation Personal Essays	Graduates Spring 2015
Kevin Agyakwa*	Communication; Dr. Freed History; Writing Arguments	Speeches Personal Essays	Graduates Spring 2016
Adriana Rizzo STP Tutor	Childhood Education	Sustained Tutoring	Student teaching in Spring
Paul Halley*	Creative Writing	Citation	Graduates Spring 2016
Stephanie Knapp* STP Tutor esp test prep	Professional Writing Speech Communication	Academic Research Essays Speeches	Graduates in Fall 2015
Sierra Smith*	New transfer tutor; observe six times before payroll.		
Ellen Ricks*	ditto		

Potsdam College Writing Center: Staff Contract

August 21, 2013

I agree to strive to meet the following expectations and to communicate well about problems:

Punctuality and attendance: Arrive a few minutes early, in order to greet the tutee and begin on time. Avoid missing a scheduled appointment. **See details** on reverse.

Quality of tutoring: Be a great sounding board, and help the writer own the work and the ideas. Show your understanding, share your knowledge, and maintain writer's control.

Show the writer that you care about his success: For example, listen intently and "say back" to show what you hear and what works well; go to web resources for necessary knowledge; take an extra five minutes at the end of a session for planning and clarification; greet the writer in the CWC and around campus; etc. Seek feedback on your tutoring choices.

Record-keeping and communication: Complete **gold client cards and blue visit cards**. Complete **tutor logs** daily and submit **time sheets** correctly. Read weekly tutor **email** and new communication log.

Training, Development, and Mentoring: Strive for continual improvement. Participate in staff meetings and fulfill each semester's professional development program. Foster collaborative culture among CWC staff members and trainees, and work with staff liaison.

Public Presence: Talk & dress professionally, in order to keep the focus on the tutoring, to show respect for diverse clients' values, and to maintain professional credibility. There is no food allowed in CWC. See details below.

Professional Conduct Policies: Adhere to CWC "Professional Conduct" policies on confidentiality, neutrality, representing the CWC, etc. Adhere to Punctuality and Attendance policies. Problems will be discussed and recorded by Shift Leaders, Asst Dir., and Dir.

The College Writing Center agrees to do the following for the staff members:

- To offer appropriate training, supervision, and coaching.
- To strive to create a creative, collegial, and professional work environment.
- To negotiate CWC policies with tutors and staff in order to improve the Center.
- To provide individual evaluation of each tutor and staff person every semester.

I have read, understood, and accepted these policies; I have had the opportunity to ask questions about them; and I understand the consequences of violating them.

Tutor: _____ Date: _____

Contract, continued: Punctuality and Attendance Policy

We really appreciate the conscientious effort that tutors make to be on time and ready to work. And 97% of the time, the CWC works beautifully. **Thank you!** This policy reflects your great choices.

When a tutor is late, colleagues try to reach her/him, to reassign the client, and to break the bad news to the client. The client might feel unimportant or unhappy. If a few tutors are late a few times, there is a significant negative impact. Here is our policy. In short, repeat lateness or no-shows lead to a two-week suspension and then dismissal.

Tutor punctuality:

- **Arrive one-two minutes early.**
 - Official tardiness is five minutes late, according to computer clocks in CWC. Receptionists and Grad Assistants will take note.
 - If you know can't be on time, plan ahead and request that the appointment be scheduled for quarter past instead of on the hour (e.g., 10:15 instead of 10:00).
- **Consequences of tutors' tardiness:**
 - Second tardiness: talk with Asst. Director and Director; perhaps change your schedule.
 - Fourth tardiness: two week suspension, but complete scheduled appointments for week.
 - Sixth tardiness: fired for the academic year; may reapply next year.
 - Tardiness for on-call hours: we will drop your on-call hours.

Tutor attendance: absences and no-shows

- **Avoid cancelling any scheduled appointment at any time.**
 - To cancel any scheduled appointment before 48 hours, email the Asst. Director and try to find a substitute.
 - To cancel any scheduled appointment on short notice (48 hours), first call the desk, **then** text and email Asst. Director and Director.
- **Consequences of tutors' no-shows:**
 - First no-show: talk with Asst. Director and Director; perhaps change schedule.
 - Second no-show: two week suspension, but complete scheduled appointments for week.
 - Third no-show: fired for the academic year; may reapply next year.

Tutor attendance:

- If no appointment is scheduled, please cancel yourself out as late as possible by informing the receptionist on duty and Bethany.
 - When possible, cancel as late as possible (morning of/ night before). When necessary, cancel well in advance and notify Bethany that you have done so. Never cancel when a client has already booked the appointment.
 - We will monitor payroll and try to keep it equitable, although senior tutors get more hours.
- If you work the desk, please track turnaways with client no-shows and cancellations in back of binder on reception desk. Crucial!

CWC Guidelines for Public Presence – during paid time, down time, or off-duty hours.

These guidelines reflect the best practices of tutors over more than ten years.
They recognize clients' needs for concentration, attention, and respect.

September 2014

- Show up: If you are not going to be able to make your CWC shift due to illness or emergency, please call the CWC (267-3059) and email Bethany and Dr. Mitchell so the coordinators can adjust the schedule and attempt to cover your appointments. See "Punctuality and Attendance Policy" on the back of the contract.
- Eat elsewhere: No food is allowed in the Writing Center, but drinks are allowed (away from computers).
- Dress: dress slightly better than you would for class. Please don't wear clothes that are dirty, torn, or too revealing. Smell good.
- Talk: We strive to create a professional environment where clients feel welcome and important. Greet all guests enthusiastically and helpfully. Otherwise, speak in a quiet way that keeps the focus on our clients -- whether they are in the hall, at the door, at the reception desk, in the Writery, or in a consultation.
 - Social talk should not distract from communication with clients or welcoming of them. This holds in every part of the CWC, during paid time and down time. Help your colleagues notice when they are getting too loud.
 - Completely silence cell phones before entering the CWC. Absolutely do not text at the tutoring table or when a client is waiting for you. Occasional texts "on the sidelines" are okay, but use your time here to connect with the people you see around you.
 - Staff should not check e-mail or Facebook or use a phone for personal business. Tutors should avoid leaving the Writing Center during paid hours or having social conversations with friends from outside the Writing Center.
- Write: You may use Writery computers during your off-duty hours, but do not monopolize them for long periods. If a client seeks a computer and all are in use, please notice, immediately log off, and tell them that you are doing so. The client comes first.
- Inform Assistant Director or Grad Assistant immediately if a client seems inappropriate or upsetting to you. Rare but real examples include a client pursuing a date, writing hateful text, showing serious mental incoherence, expressing a complaint about the CWC, or refusing input on plagiarism. (See "Professional Conduct in the College Writing Center.")

Potsdam College Writing Center: Professional Conduct in the Writing Center August 1, 2012

As students, the CWC asks you to contribute your peer perspective and to make student clients comfortable; it also fosters your growth and learning. On the other hand, as employees or trainees, you are in a partnership with the CWC and its clients on campus. Your actions and words usually reflect positively on the CWC, but they can also occasionally reflect negatively on it, damaging the CWC's partnerships or morale and relations within the CWC.

Although problems of professional conduct discussed here are rare in the CWC, they are very serious. Each of these areas can be highly charged and complex. Please bring up questions with senior staff, graduate assistants, Assistant Director, or the Director, at any time.

Professional Appearance creates an inclusive and mature atmosphere. Eating, loud personal conversation, and personal computer work discourage visitors from interrupting us, because they think we are too busy for them. See "CWC Guidelines for Public Presence."

Writers Maintain Responsibility for their own work. Students' writing is a means of learning and teachers assess it as a demonstration of that learning. In order to encourage learning and growth, and to enable fair faculty assessment, tutors are careful to help writers make their own choices.

Do not do work for the writer. Do not write on the student's paper or tell the writer how to write any part of the paper. You may offer some options to stimulate a reluctant writer's composing. You may take notes and share them with the writer.

Help the writer understand the assignment, but recognize that you might not understand it perfectly either. Help the writer understand what the assignment says, but do not presume to read the teacher's mind. Coach writers to communicate with the teacher. That communication is part of academic writing!

Confidentiality: Many tutees may feel vulnerable about visiting the CWC. We must offer complete respect and confidentiality. PLEASE ASK if you have any doubts as to what is confidential.

- The identity of tutees, what they worked on, how they worked, and what they said is all confidential. Don't discuss tutees or assignments outside the CWC, whether you name names or not. The CWC must be a safe place to seek assistance.
- You are encouraged to talk about your sessions with senior staff, the director, or the Practicum instructor. Do so, in the interest of your own growth as a tutor. **And we want to know.** But use careful judgment in discussing sessions with peers. Do not JUST vent to peers about an upsetting session. Maintain respect for the client.
- Conceivably, a teacher could ask you about a specific tutee. Please do not respond to such questions with any information about the tutee. Refer the teacher to the director.
- A student might write about something personal or sensitive in an essay, and that must remain confidential. **However, if you feel that a tutee's writing, speech, or actions may indicate that s/he might be a danger to herself/himself or others, contact the Assitant Dir. and Director immediately.**
- If you suspect a student of cheating or plagiarism, you should address them directly and respectfully. Often, students are not aware that they are citing incorrectly, so review the basic guidelines. Give them our handout, "Three Golden Rules for College Academics." Mention the consequences of plagiarism. Call over a senior tutor or graduate assistant to help you communicate the importance of your points. **You are not, however, obliged to pursue or report your suspicions of cheating or plagiarism.** In fact, you should maintain confidentiality.
- Confidentiality and respect apply to CWC colleagues. Do not gossip about each other inside or outside the CWC, or bring outside stories into the CWC if they might be hurtful, embarrassing, or untrue. Do not take

stories from CWC outside. Address questions and concerns to the colleague or the Director. **Our mutual respect produces the healthy working atmosphere we all value.**

Respect, Discrimination, and Harrassment: Behaviors in the CWC are subject to the College's code of student conduct. Harrassment and discrimination are not acceptable.

Neutrality: Students might comment on their teachers, peers, courses/majors, or the assignments. Do not join in any complaints, but help them respond to the teacher's expectations for the assignment. Your own feelings about a teacher, assignment, course, etc. are not relevant to another student's experience and sharing them only distracts from the student's work at hand. A client could choose to quote your views in an argument with a professor over grades/comments, or in advising other students.

Of course, peer tutoring works well because you are peers. Use your shared student culture and status to help writers relax, to pose helpful questions, to empathize -- without criticizing teachers or assignments.

- Never predict what grade a student might earn on a paper. Do not dispute or question a teacher's grade. Express sympathy and help the student respond productively. Describe what you see in the piece. Don't express your own opinion about the work, the assignment, or the grade. **Offer general sympathy for the student's difficulties and put the focus on the work.**
- Sometimes, part of an assignment will genuinely confuse a tutor and tutee. Coach the tutee to seek clarification from the instructor. Occasionally, you might also remind a student that s/he could show current drafts and request an extension in order to keep revising, but always state that such choices are **the teacher's alone. No guarantees, no vouching for that choice.**
- Sometimes it is appropriate to inform students of appropriate ways to question, appeal, or seek clarification regarding a teacher's grade, comments, or teaching. Normal procedures include written and verbal requests to the teacher, appeal to the department chair, student evaluations, etc. In a neutral way, point out that the correct procedures for a formal appeal are found in the college's Undergraduate Catalog under "Student Appeal Procedures." Do not recommend a particular course of action.

Representing the CWC: Officially, only the director speaks for the CWC. However, faculty, staff, and students may see your words and actions as reflecting on the CWC. You have complete rights to freedom of speech, but there are times when it is inappropriate to speak as a CWC employee.

- Use your best judgment when discussing the CWC or your work as a tutor. Be very cautious and stick to the kinds of messages we discuss with tutees, in our literature, and in our orientations.
- Use your judgment to determine your role in a specific context: are you acting as a student or tutor? Do not try to blur or to merge the two roles in your speech, writing, or actions.
- Do not invoke your tutor role in a complaint about or criticism of pedagogy, assignments, grading, comments, etc., or to persuade a peer, teacher, or staff member to your point of view. Use appropriate lines of communication: stay in your student role when you are a student.
- Being a tutor will not give you instant credibility with a professor. They might scrutinize you more.

Consequences: If an employee or trainee violates any of these important policies, senior staff, the Assistant Director, and/or the Director will speak with them. Training, suspension, and dismissal are options if the tutor cannot resolve the problem. **You are always encouraged to discuss these issues with the director and senior staff.**

**SUNY Potsdam College Writing Center
Staff Assessment Worksheet** August 1, 2012

Assessment should occur at least once per semester and be used for promotion decisions. It should be aligned with the terms of the contract and be based on observation of tutor, review of tutor logs, tutee feedback, and tutor's self-assessments. Assessment should be conducted by the director who has had the most contact with the tutor. It should suggest specific directions for improvement by tutors and CWC.

Name: _____ Semester: _____

Punctuality and attendance

Initials	Date	Excellent	Acceptable	Improve	Comments	Goals

Quality of tutoring (discuss observations by peers and supervisors)

Initials	Date	Exc	Acc	Impr	Comments	Goals

Record-keeping and communication

Initials	Date	Exc	Acc	Impr	Comments	Goals

Public Presence and Professional Conduct

Initials	Date	Exc	Acc	Impr	Comments	Goals

Add comments on

- Training and staff development activities, collaborative culture, mutual tutoring;
- Special optional projects or activities;
- Suggestions for improvement of CWC and staff member's performance.

Time Sheets, Contracts, and Tutor Log

Tutor Log: It's crucial to fill out each hour you work that will show up on your time sheet. Complete your log every day you work. The comments are just a very brief record and reflection for your use in tutoring those clients again and in your self-assessment. We will not read your logs closely, but we do use them to confirm time sheets.

CWC Contract: If you understand and accept the policies, sign a copy in your section of binder. The contract's content is the basis of your evaluation.

Student Assistant Contract: Complete your Student Assistant paperwork (contract, tax forms, and I-9) in the first week of the semester, in order to be paid.

Time sheets:

- Just before time sheets are due, download the student time sheet Excel file <http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/student.cfm> Fill in your information at top, including your pay rate and the date of CURRENT pay period. Enter time according to sample. The Excel time sheet will calculate the time for you.
- Print, sign, and deliver to folder on Assistant Director's desk by Wed. 10am – **this is a strict deadline.** Attach post-its to explain any unusual hours. If you work on Wed., we will add those hours in and inform you.
- We will cross-check the time sheets against tutor log book, Meeting Maker, blue cards, and receptionists' records.

Short sessions: You can bill for up to 30 minutes for a client no-show and up to 45 minutes for a short session, but label your time sheet accordingly.

In remaining paid time, offer to assist the Assistant Director or Shift Leader, observe a peer, or talk with a practicum student for the remaining time.

Bill one hour for a complete session, and spend more than 45 minutes of that hour with the client if s/he needs it.

Walk-ins: You are welcome to wait for walk-ins at any hour. Once per week, we can pay you 15 minutes to wait for a walk-in. Label your time sheet accordingly.

Cancellation policy is tighter: One last-minute cancellation counts as one no-show; see complete cancellation policy on green handout and on our web page. Also, every client is limited to 12 sessions per semester in Carson.

What Makes a Good Written Argument? Some simple thoughts.

An argument is basically a statement with reasons to back it up. To get people to think about your point or your perspective, you'll have to give reasons for it and back it up some proof. That doesn't mean your point is the only valid truth, but simply that you must back it up in an honest, convincing way. In presenting a strong network of claim, reasons, and evidence, you try to show your teacher your thought process and your grasp on new learning and research.

Claim: Every claim is debatable – that's what makes it interesting. It is ONE valid way to look at this situation. Significant: here's why this issue and this claim should matter to readers. Explained: spell it out and clarify what we know, believe, or understand.

Reasons: Reasons why the writer believes this point of view. Present reasons clearly and convincingly, to show the reader your perspective in more detail. Often it helps to "preview" the reasons and then discuss each in more detail, with evidence.

Evidence: Reasons come from the writer's mind/interpretation, but evidence is something we could all look at. It confirms the reasons and the claim. Evidence includes examples, data, supporting sources, and sometimes anecdotes of firsthand experience. Evidence must be CREDIBLE. The writer explains clearly how evidence fits the argument: the evidence cannot speak for itself.

Steinberg and co-authors in *Inquiry, Argument, and Change* offer two helpful rubrics. Clarify, Extend, and Restructure: An argument usually clarifies what we already know, extends our knowledge with new information or perspective, and then to some extent tries to restructure what we believe or know. Understand, Believe, and Act: An argument should first help the reader understand the situation, and next believe the writer's point of view. So ask, can I be understood? And can I be believed? Only in a few cases do we need to argue so forcefully as to get someone to act in a new way.

Potsdam College Writing Center: Plagiarism and Citation

Three acceptable ways of using someone else's words or ideas:

- Incorporate into your own thinking and language with citation
- Paraphrase with citation: Always paraphrase completely: don't just tinker with the words, because those are their words
- Exact quotation, indented or not, with citation

Plagiarism includes:

Copying and pasting from an Internet source into your paper without using correct citation.

- Putting information in your own words (paraphrasing) without showing where the information originally came from.
- Poor paraphrasing, which is just changing a few words from the original even if you give credit for the source.
- Recycling your own papers (or sections of them) from another course. This is known as multiple submission and is a form of academic dishonesty.

Guidelines for good citation:

- Leave a clear trail for your reader back to each of your original sources.
- Give credit even when you put information in your own words.
- Cite everything from every source, including web pages of any and all kinds, lectures, interviews, movies, TV programs, newspapers, etc
- Let us emphasize: cite anything you get off of a web page: information off of the world wide web is not free -- it still has an author or sponsor you must cite.

Tutors: get to know all the relevant styles: MLA, APA -- and AAA, ASA, CSE, and Chicago. Turn to knowledgeable tutors and senior staff. Use Handbooks and Diana Hacker's citation web page to confirm details. Run to the web:

www.dianahacker.com/resdoc

**SUNY POTSDAM COLLEGE WRITING CENTER PROCESS FOR PLAGIARISM
REFERRALS FROM OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND COMMUNITY
STANDARDS**

The form below will be distributed by Annette Robbins to each referred student, received by a CWC Citation Consultant, kept on file, and signed and returned to the student by that Consultant when the process is complete.

Information for completing your student conduct sanction related to Academic
Dishonesty

Student Name:

- 1- **Write a reflective summary of academic dishonesty violation during your meeting with Annette Robbins.** Describe the violation and answer the following question as well: What are the aspects of citation that I find most confusing?

- 2- Contact the College Writing Center (Carson 106, ext. 3059, cwc@potSDam.edu) and set up an appointment with a CWC Citation Consultant. **Indicate that you need to work with Bethany Fobare, Lyndi Scott, or Leia Depeche.**

- 3- You are responsible for completing the individualized educational plan set forth to you by the CWC Citation Consultant. This typically requires three meetings: the first for evaluation, the second for instruction and practice, and a third to review your further practice.
 - a. First meeting with CWC Citation Consultant: You must complete a citation survey with the CWC at your first meeting. (This survey will be kept in the CWC and destroyed at the end of the semester.) **Provide your reflective essay and paper showing the violation** to the Consultant at the start of your meeting. The Consultant will review all of these materials to tailor a plan to your educational needs.
 - b. Second meeting with CWC Citation Consultant: Instruction and practice tailored to your individual learning needs. The Consultant will assign you material to review and practice exercises in any necessary skills. Complete these for the third meeting.
 - c. Third meeting with CWC Citation Consultant: Bring completed practice exercises for review.

Personal responsibility: The CWC educational process cannot cover every aspect of citation. YOU ARE PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN LEARNING AND YOUR OWN ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. Therefore, you must also identify strategies for answering your future questions about citation and apply what you learn in your future academic writing.

- 4- Upon completion of your established plan, the Consultant you have been working with will sign this paper and you are to return it to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Your sanction must be completed by _____.

Signature of CWC Citation Consultant

Date

Tips for working with Second Language Writers

General Tips:

- Validate where you understand the student's point in the essay – don't just focus on where you don't. If you've ever attempted to communicate in a second language, you'll understand the panic/frustration a student might feel when attempts at communication result in a confused frown – and the pleasure/relief when someone signals, "Hey, I understand."
- Sometimes, it might be more helpful to read the paper (or portions of it) out loud for the student– some second language writers can "hear" problems in grammar or spelling better this way
- Foreground your role as a "tour guide" of written English: "In Academic Written English, we say this...or use this grammar construction." This approach can remind you both that the student is learning certain conventions and rules of a language, and you are there to offer assistance as a guide. It moves you both away from the idea of error as mistake--you messed up--you could be stupid--boy, do you look dumb.
- Native speakers have a hard time understanding what their instructor has written in the margins – for second language writers, this might be even more of a struggle. Make sure the student understands teacher comments. Have the student paraphrase what they think the teacher is asking.
- Remember that learning a language is a process – the students will not complete that process in one tutoring session – again, you can't help them "fix" everything in one session
- Studies have shown that it is harder to remember information exchanged orally in a second language. Make sure the student leaves with some 'aid' to remember the advice – your notes on a piece of scrap paper or a handout. Even better, have the student take notes to help her remember the exchanges made during the conference.

For patterns of grammatical error that are pretty easy to identify: tense, subject-verb agreement, run-ons, fragments, articles.

1. Get a sense of how aware the student is of her error patterns – ask what issues she needs to focus on. *Another great strategy*: tell the student to read the paper out loud and to stop when she gets to an error – this will inform you quickly about the student's recognition of her own errors. If she reads past them, you know you need to work on error recognition as well as correction.
2. Focus on patterns of error (verb tense problems, subject verb agreement, missing articles) and start with the pattern that most interferes with your comprehension as a reader.
For example, run-ons might make the paper much harder to read than missing plural "s."
In a narrative essay, verb tense errors might make the chronology of the essay very confusing.
In some essays, missing articles might be the most irritating and distracting.
3. Establish the patterns that you will deal with in that session: "Let's address the tense errors and articles in this session." This is important – many students see themselves as having BAD GRAMMAR (as in, 'My grammar is just one big nebulous lump of bad errors'). Tackling specific patterns can give the student a sense of focus, hope and control...all is not lost!
4. Pick one error in the student's paper that fits the pattern.
 - a) Write out the correct version of the sentence on scrap paper. Ask the student to describe what he or she sees as the difference between the incorrect and correct version. Then ask the student if she can generalize a rule from your example, or better yet if she can identify a pattern that she can look for

when she edits. (You might refer the student to a pertinent handout or handbook page for an explanation if she really can't figure out the rule inductively)

- b) Pick out another error, and ask the student to correct it.
 - c) Have the student identify one or two errors on his/her own and then practice correcting them.
5. If you see places where the student has correctly used the verb tense, article, etc, point them out...again, to demonstrate to the student that it is not hopeless. He is achieving some degree of success.
 6. Let the student know if there are other serious errors that you don't have time to cover in that session. This is extremely important. A student might think that you have helped her 'fix' the paper and then feel shock, betrayal, and anger when she gets a bad grade from the teacher: "That tutor helped me, and I still got a bad grade!"

For usage (lexical or vocabulary) errors:

Have the student underline phrases where she is not quite sure how to "say it in English." Suggest two or three different ways to say it and let the student pick which one she'd like to use. (The object here is to make the student take responsibility.) Suggest to the student that she do this with other native speakers in the future – underline and seek several opinions on how to say it. You might also have the student write another sentence using the phrase or word as a way of learning it.

If a student is struggling with vocabulary in a certain place in the essay, give her several words that they might use and let them pick...Again, give the student choices, not answers.

Sometimes students can say it better than they can write it. Underline places where you are confused and have them tell you what they mean. Copy their words down on a piece of scrap paper.