

Tutor Panel Meeting

Faculty present: Jim Bowsher, Kate Smith, Kathleen Feinblum, Katharine Harer, Mary Warden,
Doug Sherman, Jarrod Feiner

What to focus on - *When you send a student for tutoring, what specific, concrete activities are you expecting to occur in the tutoring session?*

- Some teachers use the referral form asking tutors to focus working on specific tasks or issues that come up in the students writing. Teachers are encouraged to use this form to offer tutors a better understanding of expectations for the tutoring session.
- When the student brings the prompt and/or the marked paper, tutors should pay attention to the prompt and any notes put on the paper by the instructor
 - Look through the notes on the paper with the student and mesh your own judgment on what the student needs versus the instructor's comments
- It also depends on what stage of the writing process the student comes in to determine what strategies to use to help them.
- Professor Feinblum prefers to have idea development happen with her in her office hours; otherwise, if the student comes in at this stage of the writing process, help them brainstorm, especially organize in the form of an outline.
- Ask and continually ask questions to help develop ideas and writing
- Identify patterns and issues that come up and point out to the student when and where they occur
- Provide as much clarity as you can where it is lacking
- Prioritize your time effectively and accordingly during tutoring sessions; make sure that sessions have a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- If a student does not bring his/her resources (i.e. prompt) just try to proceed the best way you can and sometimes there is a copy of the prompt on file. Teachers can make their assignments available to the learning center (either hard copy or electronic).

In what order of importance should the following items be attended to in a tutoring session?

Depending on the stage the student(s) is in ...

- 1) Prompt
- 2) Ideas/Development
- 3) Patterns of Error (grammar, but grouped in patterns that the student struggles with

Issues that tutors encounter in tutoring sessions:

- a) Student doesn't always bring in the assignment or prompt
- b) Student doesn't always show the paper with teacher's comments on it
- c) Attitudes toward tutoring: shame/fear
- Suggestions:
 - Do your best to console the student i.e. "some people have a natural talent in another subject or hobby" etc.
 - Remind the student of the checklist that is in the tutoring folder and where it specifically addresses the student's responsibility to bring in the prompt and all items related to the assignment.

Teachers' responses to the following scenario: *Your student comes to us with a paper that a) marginally addresses the topic, b) is rife with grammar errors, and c) reflects poor reading comprehension. The paper is due tomorrow and there is one more hour left in the tutoring day. Not being able to address all three in one session, which would you prefer we address?*

Reading & Understanding are important, but they are long-term processes. Faculty in this group overwhelmingly identified grammar and structure as areas that should take precedent. Also, some teachers are not religious about the prompt and want the student to explore their own interpretation of the topic.

- In the short term, faculty prefer that tutors:
 - 1) Focus primarily on the paper and/or structure
 - 2) Then, focus on grammar
- In the long term, faculty prefer that tutors:
 - 1) Work with reading and vocabulary

Some suggestions for tutoring Awkward Sentences

- 1) Break it down to the basics – where's the subject (point), where's the verb, etc.
- 2) It's OK to supply words or word forms for students who do not appear to know them (i.e., a student lacks the word "concise" so you supply it, or a student says "success" instead of "succeed"). Teachers do not consider this to be "too much help" or to be over-editing.
- 3) If you are unsure if you are crossing the line between guiding and editing, make sure it's a teaching moment, where you are teaching the student the rule, not an editing moment that goes entirely unexplained.
 - Focus more on verb tense and structure of the sentence, if ideas are joined poorly and are conflicting.
 - Fix prepositions last
 - Focus on what specifically is affecting the meaning of the sentence i.e. fragments, run-ons, sentence structure.

What errors to focus on? *When you encounter error in student writing, do you view all errors as equally distracting, or are there some that are less objectionable than others? What are they?*

- 1) Errors that affect the meaning are most important
- 2) Errors not affecting meaning are less important
- 3) There is software (UUEG) in the ESOL lab to help with grammar and sentence structure for second language speakers
- 4) There are handouts in the drawer near John's desk and also on line to help native speakers with sentence issues
- 5) The Bell Reader is available in the learning center; this has many materials in it dealing with grammar and writing.

Comparison ENGL 846 to 100: *How do your expectations of a student's writing ability change from 846 to 100? What is the least they must enter 100 with?*

- The thought process is more sophisticated in ENGL 100
- Skills to come into ENGL 100 with at least the following:
 - o Can write essays with a defined thesis and body paragraphs
 - Documentation
 - Quotes
 - Quality of analysis
- Explaining "why" is a little more focused from ENGL 846 to 100
- In ENGL 100, critical thinking/citation (MLA) has increased
- ENGL 100 is more "Driven by ideas" and not so much by summary; there is more analysis and there is more independent work for the student outside of class.

The department is exploring possibilities of bringing ENGL 105 back to serve as a stepping stone in case students need more time before they reach ENGL 100.