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The Rough Draft

University Writing Center, University of Notre Dame (574) 631-5390

www.nd.edu/~writing



Notes and News:

- Next Full Staff Meeting—
October 30, 4:30pm
- The WC will close at
4:00pm Wednesday,
November 27 for
Thanksgiving Break
- Remember to turn in
your Tutor Goals
- See the schedule posted
in the WC for pay dates
and timecard due dates
- Crunch-time hours in
effect: October 15-17,
November 17-27, and
December 2-15
- Thanks to tutors who
gave "Tutor Talks" to
the roughly 35 classes
who visited the WC or
had tutors visit their
classes

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"Shadows" Step into the Light: New Tutors Trained and Tutoring

After twelve grueling hours of training, innumerable hours of shadowing, and more cookies than a Keebler Elf could count, the Fall 2002 class of Writing Center tutors has graduated into taking their own appointments.

This class of tutors has seven undergraduates ranging from sophomores to seniors, and, for the first time, two current MFA students and one MFA graduate.

As usual, the undergraduates hail from disciplines as disparate as English and

Theology and Poli-Sci. They come highly recommended by professors and have unique writing credentials. Ask around and you'll find that, among other interesting tidbits, one new tutor has aspirations of writing for Saturday Night Live, one recently helped seal the deal for a contract with Will Smith, and one was published in this year's volume of *Fresh Writing*. Extra animal crackers to the first person who can match the biographical trivia with the appropriate new tutor.

We welcome you all!

Graduate Student Tutees: Meeting the Need

In response to the rising number of graduate student tutees we have seen in recent years, we have hired two current MFA students and one MFA graduate to specialize in work with graduate students.

Stuart Greene, Director of the University Writing Program, helped us acquire funds for the graduate student tutors so that we could add hours rather than take away from tutoring opportunities for undergraduates.

In order to promote this new program, about 25 graduate students from the Peace Studies program, where most of our graduate students come from, were

invited to an informational meeting at the Writing Center early in the semester. The Peace Studies students introduced themselves and identified their areas of interest, as did our tutors, Shawn, Candice, and Jon. The tutors and potential tutees had a chance to chat with each other and make plans for work here.

Those chats have lead to 45 visits already this semester, so we are on track to exceed last year's 175 visits.

The graduate tutors will also be developing handouts to give students on topics such as writing a thesis statement and citing sources.



Brand New Unit, Same Old Priorities: Tips for FYC

One of our biggest supporters, First-Year Composition, is moving from the Unit One “Framing” assignment to the Unit Two “Researched Argument” assignment. Here are some words of advice for tutors who might or might not be familiar with these essays.

April Lidinsky, Assistant Director of the Writing Program and FYC instructor, reminds us that, “With all three Unit papers, the key aspects we’re looking for are a strong argument that pulls through every paragraph for the whole paper (or, to use the shish kebab metaphor, which skewers every paragraph), and sources and evidence that illuminate the argument.” Try drawing a shish kebab with the argument being the “skewer” and the paragraphs being the tasty morsels of meat or tofu. This emphasizes that the argument is the core of the essay.

Try drawing the shish kebab metaphor for an argument.



“This is not a research paper.”

When asked to clarify the “framing” concept for Unit One, Lidinsky responded, “For Unit One, we want students to do more than compare and contrast with sources. We want them to use one source as a ‘tool’ for examining another source. Framing is applying a theory/idea from one context in another context to see what is revealed (and then the author’s job is to say what’s significant about what is revealed). For example, using gender theory as a frame for analyzing *The Wizard of Oz* will reveal some aspects of that text but not others. Using Marxist theory will reveal other aspects of the text.”

The concept of “framing” is not exclusive to Unit One, however. Lidinsky says, “For Units Two and Three, students are doing research to find information, facts and evidence, but also for THEORIES they can use to analyze this data (i.e. - framing theories). So, a student writing a paper about the significance of gender representation in 10 current MTV videos will use sources discussing MTV explicitly, but is also likely to use gender theory and film theory articles that don’t address MTV explicitly, in order to apply those ideas to the specific context of her Unit 2 argument so that she can explore the significance of what she is finding in her other sources.”

Writing Program Director, Stuart Greene, offered the advice he gives to his own FYC students:

“This is not a research paper. Students can use sources in a number of different ways, not necessarily limited to the following: (1) define what’s at issue, (2) state your argument, (3) support your argument, (4) make a concession, or (5) discuss a counterargument.”

Whether students bring in an early Unit Two or late Unit One essay, it is important to give priority to the argument. Under the deferred grading system of FYC, students have all semester to revise their essays. At this point, no draft is final!

“Framing”—A Definition From the FYC Coursepack

Framing is a reading and writing strategy referring to the key terms and theories used to name, define, specify, and organize arguments. The specific “frame” that an author uses focuses the reader’s attention on issues in a way that influences the reader’s understanding of the issue. For example, we have learned that Hirsch approaches the issue of education from the frame of “cultural literacy.” Another author might frame the issue in terms of multicultural education, race, or even economics. By framing his argument in terms of “cultural literacy,” Hirsch shapes the way we process the details surrounding debates on education. By identifying the frame an author uses, the reader is better able to understand the argument of the essay, as well as identify possible flaws in the author’s reasoning.



“...focuses the reader’s attention...”



“Tutor Moments” from Jenn Randazzo

A student came in last week with an FYC paper that—albeit disorganized—had a lot of potential. The writer was making some key points, but they were scattered throughout the paper, and each paragraph was attempting to make too many points at once.

Since he had a decent thesis, I decided to have him work on paragraph organization. As I am apt to do, I went straight for the “topic sentences” lecture, which did not seem to help this particular tutee. From there, I went to try various other strategies, but I could tell that I had lost his attention, and we were both getting frustrated. So I just started chatting with him for a few minutes, and it came out that he is a chemistry major...

I gathered my thoughts for a few minutes, rummaging through my brain to bring back the awful memories of my bio major days, and tried a new approach. I drew him a chemistry reaction equation—you know, the arrow thing. On the left side of the arrow were the “reactants”—things to put into a paragraph such as quotes from the readings, his own ideas, ideas from lecture notes, personal examples, etc. Then, on the right side of the arrow, I told him he had to have only one product—only one main point that emerged succinctly from all of the “reactants” that he put into the paragraph. Obscure as it was, it worked! He sat there for the remaining twenty minutes and rewrote two of his paragraphs for me. One of the best tutor moments ever!

✓ *Use the convenient spell checker button for EVERY tutor note.*

Keeping it Clean: A Refresher on Entering New Students into the Tutor Notes Database

Here are some reminders for keeping our database “clean” and accurate:

- 1) Get the correct and complete spelling of tutee and instructor’s name.
- 2) Complete EVERY block of information.

Computer expert extraordinaire, Robin MacRorie, created a detailed explanation of how to use the database. Here is a reprint of her instructions on entering new students (i.e., someone who has NEVER been to the Writing Center before, not just new this year):

To Create a New Record

- 1) Hit the New record button at the top of the Main Screen
- 2) Type the student ID number of the tutee into the ID number field. (Or the student’s unique ND ID number.) If that student does NOT want his or her ID number used, you **must** create a new,

- unique number for that person! EVERYONE must have some number entered into the ID spot. Absolutely no exceptions.
- 3) If the name of the student does NOT appear, go to step 4a. If it does appear, go on to step 5.
- 4a) Go to the Students Database window
 - b) Input the ID number, first and last names and sex.
 - c) Go back to the Main Screen window.
- 5) Complete the rest of the information for that record. You **must** input all fields except for “comments” and “send copy to instructor.” You **must** input a date and time in the correct formats. (mm/dd/yy for dates and 00:00 for times)
- 6) When finished with the tutoring session, complete the comments and send copy to instructor fields.

See Connie if you would like a complete copy of the database instructions.



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Where are They Now? *Ryan Chasey*

Since graduating from Notre Dame, I have moved back to my hometown of Fort Wayne, Indiana. In June I began working for Mayor Graham Richard as the Finance Director of his re-election campaign. This job came about because I worked as an intern on the Mayor's first campaign the summer after my freshman year and subsequently served as an intern in his administration for the past two summers. The Mayor is up for re-election in November 2003, and it is my job to plan and coordinate the fundraising efforts of the campaign.

This job has put me in contact with many well-respected professionals, and utilizes many of the communication skills I refined while working at the Writing Center. Moving back to my hometown has also given me the opportunity to reacquaint myself with many old friends, but I miss regularly seeing the great friends I made at Notre Dame. I am confident that the proud tradition of the Writing Center lives on, and I wish each of you the best this school year. Please feel free to get in touch with me at RPCchasey@hotmail.com.

Brett and Randazzo Seek Input for Conference

Aidan Brett and Jenn Randazzo would like tutors' input for the paper they are presenting at the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, October 26.

They will be discussing the problems and rewards of undergraduates tutoring graduate ESL students. Please send narratives to Aidan (abrett@nd.edu).

Start thinking now about papers you might propose for this conference next year!

Our Mission Statement

The University Writing Center at the University of Notre Dame is dedicated to helping students become better writers. Our tutors help writers by listening well in writing conferences, reading student papers carefully, and asking questions that will stimulate new ideas about how to express ideas or construct arguments. Tutors generally inquire about the nature of a writing assignment, the particular concerns of the writer, and the focus of the

argument. Writing Center tutors work with writers all stages of the writing process -- from understanding an assignment, to developing a thesis, to using evidence, to editing and revising.

Writing Center instruction conforms to the University of Notre Dame Honor Code. Tutors do not write or edit papers for students. Instead, we help students develop strategies to achieve their goals as writers.

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