

Downey High School Writing Center

Tutors Talk!

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Section 1: Practical Dos and Don'ts

With "More Than Just an Editor," Ninfa Penaloza starts this section off with a very practical and helpful outline of what a tutor should and should not do during a tutorial. This is a very helpful article for new tutors especially.

In her article, "Verbal Support," Andrea Hernandez walks readers through the tool of reading aloud during a tutorial. She discusses practical advice on how to make this strategy work in a number of ways as well as highlighting the benefits to writers hearing their own words aloud.

In "May You Write on My Draft," Jesenia Pale warmly equates writing with art and then segues into a frank discussion on the dangers of tutors writing on student drafts.

More Than Just an Editor

Ninfa Penaloza

Students walk into the writing center with many different expectations, needs, and attitudes. Some peers know what they want to conquer, while others expect that one's job is just to proof read. Yet being a tutor is more than just to edit, you play a very important role in the writing center. Therefore I hope what's to follow helps you if you're ever in a tutor session where the tutee believes your only job is to proof read.

A tip I can give is to read the paper aloud to the student, so not are only you catching the mistakes but also your peer. By reading aloud you can make the student get more involved in the tutoring session. Asking questions like, "Does that sound correct," "Is there anything you could add right here," and lastly "What do you think can strengthen this". Questions like these allow both you and the student to build ideas off each other. Working together may allow the student to feel more comfortable and may encourage them to elaborate on ideas they may have had trouble starting. Always remember two brains work better than one but what is written on the paper should always be the student's voice not yours.

Another thing you can do is ask the student if there's a certain section of the paper they would like to focus on. By doing this, the student is able to reflect on their weaknesses and strengths, this will allow the tutor session to flow more easily and get more work done. When the student thinks your only job is to proofread, the tutoring session may become unproductive and can contain many moments of awkward silence- something you DO NOT WANT. Therefore if you notice that the student is not opening up to you because of their attitude or shyness, try small talk. Ask about their grade level, classes, hobbies, sports, and etc, this will make it easier for the student to gain confidence and comfort with you.

It's okay to fix misspelled words and sentence structure but try not to focus the whole tutoring session around this. Remember you have a talent in writing which is why you were selected, now help other students find their writing talent within. Don't force your writing tactics or ideas upon the student but rather suggest them. The student can then start to build ideas they may want to include or change in their work. Help the student improve their writing strategies, if you do this the student will most likely remember your tutoring session and can possible request you the following time for the amount of help you gave.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and remember you play an important role than just to proofread someone's paper. I hope you find this advice useful in the future and you succeed as a tutor. Lastly, I would like to wish you the best of luck and remember that you make an impact on someone every tutoring session.

Verbal Support
Andrea Hernandez

A big misconception when students come into the Writing Center is that most of them expect the tutors to get right to it and “fix” their essays for them. Others might be a little uncomfortable with another person reading and critiquing their writing. However, tutoring is much more than that. Our job is to get the students to feel more comfortable and relaxed so that they can rely on us to help them with their difficulties. In order for a tutee to become used to the environment, we, as tutors, need to be welcoming and considerate of these students. Once they do get comfortable enough to open up to us, they first start off by telling us what type of assignment they are working on and what they need help on the most.

A technique that begins this process is having the student read their writing out loud. On occasions, some students might be too timid to read their writing out loud, so the tutor might be willing to read aloud instead. This technique is helpful because it allows students to review their essay before they make any major changes to it. It gives them some time to refresh their memory on the topic that they are writing about. Furthermore, it allows them to double check if they make any minor spelling, wording or grammar mistakes that they can easily fix. Although it might seem like a weird request or a little awkward for them at first, starting off the session by reading their own words out loud helps a student make their writing flow more smoothly. It also helps them be more open and more relaxed with you as their tutor.

Throughout the session, there will most likely be a time when you and your tutee will be working on sentence structure or working on how to fix their grammar (especially if they are freshmen or sophomores), and reading their words aloud will come naturally. They want to make sure that what they are writing makes sense and also seem intelligible. Thus, verbally repeating it will make the tutee feel not only comfortable with you as their tutor, but also be comfortable with their writing as well. I have had some instances where the tutee will look embarrassed and become nervous because they misspelled a word, or they might be reading at a slower pace. It is important for the student to fix their mistakes; however, to make them feel more at ease, it is also essential that you be patient and understanding with them.

Reading their work out loud establishes a strong sense of confidence in your tutee. Seeing them grow in their writing in such a short amount of time makes me feel really accomplished and proud that I was able to guide them through this process. Even though reading out loud might not seem so important, your tutee might benefit more from it because it builds better communication between the both of you and allows you to better understand your tutee’s writing style. Along with the use of other techniques, tutoring in the Writing Center shouldn’t be a challenge!

May You Write On My Draft...

Jesenia Pale

Hello and welcome new tutors. Hopefully you are here because you want to be. Before I continue I just want to let you know that you are appreciated. It is really nice to know that there are some humans willing to share at least 30 minutes of their day to help others. The reason I am writing this is to explain why us tutors should not write on the drafts of the tutees.

Writing is a form of art. It allows us to express our feelings, our emotions, our way of thinking - it allows us to express ourselves. How you may ask? Well through our organization and our choice of words is how we do it. We get to express our opinion and our imagination and we have the right to share it if we wish, to display it like a painting because writing is art. Writing is our voice.

Everyone has a unique writing style. Where someone would add a period someone would add a comma. Where one would use 'excruciating' another would use 'very painful'. This is one reason why we should not write on their drafts, because the moment we pick up our pencil and scribble all over the draft is the same exact moment we made it ours as well. We are there to guide them not take away their way of thinking and expressing their opinion in a matter. We are there to assure any doubt they had on their paper or work out any area they are having a little trouble on. We are there to help them think more clearly, to voice our opinion or advice and let them choose which they prefer best. Doing it this way allows them to think and process information and come up with a version that combines both the tutor's advice and the tutee's voice. In the end they are the authors of their paper meaning they are the boss of their creation.

Let's cut the artistic side of it yeah? We may come across someone who will sit down and expect us to write on their drafts. Why? Well maybe someone had done it previously written all over it for them and they didn't have to do anything. This didn't bother them since they could care less. Maybe it is their first time there so they do not really know what to expect. Maybe they are just tired and do not want to think at all. Whichever it is we should not write on their drafts. If we write on their drafts we will take away their learning experience. We would have taken their opportunity to learn and grow from the areas they were lacking a bit.

Overall, we tutors should not write on the drafts of the tutees because it is not ours. The draft belongs to the creator of it and they should write on it because they probably worked really hard on it. Imagine spending so much time creating art just for someone you asked for help to take it and write in it as well? I can not. I would prefer if someone would give me some advice and I handle how I will take it on from there. If I liked something they were saying I will probably add it, but if it is something that is smart but does not suit my taste I will not add it. It is not being rude at all, because it is not my style. If I were to add something that someone said although it was good but it was not my style it will become anomaly. It will stand out and maybe in a bad way.

Anyways this may be my draft will you write on it?

Section 2: Prompts, Papers, and Process

In their article, “No Draft? Now What?” Molly Houts and Nayia Politis allay tutor fears of the unknown by giving practical advice on what to do when a student hasn’t started his/her assignment.

Conversely, in “Writing with a Completed Essay,” Kat Arriaga walks readers through what to do if a student shows up with a fully completed draft and how to make sure that student still gets 30 minutes of one-on-one time.

Andrea Diaz helps readers with some specific pieces of advice for specific genres of writing; in “Catering to the Genre You’re Tutoring,” Diaz’s clear and matter-of-fact voice guides us through the three major modes of writing on our campus: persuasion, rhetorical analysis, and creative.

Finally, Ariana Garcia and Briana Garcia in their article “Been There, Done That, Don’t Worry—I Got Your Back,” positively discuss ways to approach tutorials where the tutor has seen the assignment several times before.

No Draft? Now What?

Molly Houts

Nayia Politis

A tutor is often blind when asking a tutee what they would like to work on because they don't know what the tutee is bringing in or how much they have done. However, sometimes that tutee is just as blind coming into the tutoring session as you are. Don't panic! You got this! Below are a few tips and tricks to make this tutoring session go over as smooth as a whistle.

The student may not have a draft of their work and came into the Writing Center to get help started out with his/her writing piece. Asking for his/her prompt is an essential part of tutoring but especially if the tutee hasn't even begun his/her writing piece. Read the prompt out loud with the tutee. Then ask the tutee to tell you what the prompt is asking them to do, to ensure they understand what is being asked of them.

Talking with the student about the prompt helps shed light on ideas that they have to begin working on their piece. Not only will you be able to guide the tutee through the prompt but also you will get to understand their personal opinion on the prompt. Take this opportunity to go in depth discussing the *tutee's* ideas, not your own. If the student is off base with the prompt, bring them back into the prompt and show them what the prompt is actually asking. Remember, asking questions to the student is beneficial since it helps them easily formulate their own ideas. One brainstorming technique that can be used if the student is having trouble with expressing their ideas is getting out a piece of paper and writing key words or phrases that come to mind when reading the prompt over. Some students are more of visual learners and if they see words written down, it makes it easier for them to make a connection of what the prompt is asking.

After asking a few questions to help the tutee formulate their own ideas about the prompt, begin by crafting a thesis. This will help the tutee create an outline of their paper, making it easier to write finish writing it at home. Make sure the thesis is answering the prompt clearly and containing the main ideas—usually three—they want to bring up in their essays. Having written the thesis out, the student now knows what their paper is going to be about and is ready to begin drafting. Make sure that the thesis is going to move in chronological order so it is easy to follow. Now that the tutee has an outline of their paper, ask what they want to focus on for the rest of the session and help them accordingly. Some students might want to start drafting their paper right away, while others will for help on specific areas of the paper.

Before the tutee leaves the tutoring session, ask the student if they accomplished what they came in for. This ensures that the student is happy with how the session went and shows that their piece is one step closer to be finished and ready for a grade.

Writing with A Completed Essay

By Katia Arriaga

When you tutor, you'll come across many different writing pieces that are on different levels of completion. Some may be incomplete or completely blank but what do you do if an essay is completely done?

In my experience as a tutor, most of my tutorials have been with students who already completed the assignment. At first, I freaked out because I didn't think I could spend half an hour tutoring on a completed essay. To get over this problem, I decided to look at a couple of sentences in my tutees' writing pieces and have them look over it to make sure they have the essentials. Picking apart sentences and analyzing them again can help the tutee notice a weakness in the sentence, after all, the essay is only as strong as its sentences.

Another thing I do is make sure that my tutee understands the prompt. Sometimes the prompt may be unclear to the tutee. Writing without knowing the prompt means they'll be turning in an assignment not knowing what they did. Make sure to ask them what their view is on the prompt and make sure they follow it (a complete essay isn't always a good essay). Also, make sure their claim states their side, and that they hint as to what they will be talking about in the following paragraphs.

Lastly, one of the most key things to do if you feel like you need to, is to teach them new writing strategies. In my tutorials, I've taught tutees how to use parallel structure, how to integrate quotes, and how to properly cite sources. These small things are extremely important and attention to things like these will most likely please an English teacher. Don't be afraid to teach them new things.

When you think about it, half an hour is not too long. I have tutored with full essays a little past half an hour because I was helping them polish up their essay. In the end, it is worth it because they walk out with a better essay and you walk out as tutor with more knowledge. Most importantly, when tutoring someone with a completed essay, smile.

Catering to the Genre You're Tutoring In

Andrea Diaz

Throughout your tutoring career, you're going to have to learn to tutor in various genres, some being persuasion, rhetorical analysis, and creative writing. Speaking from my experience tutoring this year, I prefer to get a feel for what to focus on during a tutoring session. To begin any session in general, I tend to ask them for their prompt or directions in their writing assignment. I usually let them try and explain to me, because the better they can explain their directions, the better understanding they have of them.

When directing a tutorial on a persuasive essay, it's immensely important to read the student's work aloud. To make sure your tutee is comfortable with this, ask them whether they would prefer you reading it or reading it themselves. When navigating through their work, keep in mind that when you see anything unnecessary, ask them why they incorporated it in to see if it has relevance that you just didn't understand initially. Help them build on that idea by asking them pertinent questions about why they included certain ideas. Working together on developing ideas and making sure they're effectively using persuasive techniques is extremely helpful to the tutee. Make sure to comment on what their strengths are and ask them what they think their weaknesses are and strategize on how to tackle them together. Emphasize to them that loaded words are important in order to assert their position in their writing.

I've found that tutees, especially the younger ones who haven't had as much experience analyzing rhetorically, have the most trouble with rhetorical analysis. Although it is important to make sure that your tutor is writing their own paper, sometimes students require a bit more guidance when understanding rhetorical strategies. You should pose the question of what rhetorical strategies are present at first, and then ask them about the effects it has. If you find they are having trouble, try explaining some rhetorical strategies as an example, and usually once they grasp that concept, they should be able to explain the effect to you. Make sure that either you or the tutee are taking notes to make sure any good ideas don't go to waste.

On a creative piece make sure that you are guiding their ideas, but not shaping them to be different. It's crucial that their ideas be expressed because it's **their** work and **their** grade, **not yours**; your goal is to assist them, not write it for them. Having said that, giving a few example ideas can be helpful to give them an idea and get their creativity flowing. Let them express their individual thoughts and try asking them relevant questions to further develop whatever message they are trying to convey. Since it is creative, try to get the tutee to explain to you what they're trying to convey because having them attempt to articulate it will only strengthen their understanding of their writing.

Mastering how to navigate every genre in a tutorial is something that is going to take some time. If you are initially having difficulty, don't fret, it is an acquired skill you will get the hang of. Make sure to have patience, because as you're learning, so is your tutee.

Been there, Done that, Don't Worry-I got your back

Ariana Garcia and Briana Garcia

When being a Writing Center tutor, it is unavoidable that you are going to have multiple tutees coming in for the same assignment. It can be quite easy for you to fall into a bit of a slump over seeing the same prompt over and over again, but here are some tips and tricks to make the task seem less monotonous.

Everyone is different!

Sure the prompt may be the same, but every tutee is different. If you're worried you may get bored after doing the same thing over and over, don't be! Each student will give you a unique experience and definitely make your job lots of fun! Most students will have different areas where they struggle, so you as a tutor will be able to help each tutee with all aspects of the prompt, which will prove to be exciting because you can incorporate all ideas onto all the tutorials to follow. If you fear that you are unable to recall which tips you've given to which student, don't worry! It's much better to repeat a helpful tip than not say it at all. Tutoring can get a bit hectic, but try your best to give every tutee a unique experience.

Watch out when saying "I've seen this prompt before"

Although you've seen the same prompt multiple times, perhaps informing the tutee may not be the best idea. In our experience, informing the tutee that you're very familiar with the assignment can lead to one of two scenarios:

1. They'll be more confident that you will understand their work and are eager to show you their work .
2. Or- unfortunately the most common- they will assume you know the "right answer" and will push for you to write the paper for them.

We recommend holding off on saying you've seen the same prompt a million times just to assure that the tutee doesn't take the comment as an invitation to do their work for them.

Same goes for projects/books you're familiar with from the past

An early goal of a tutoring session is to make the tutee feel comfortable. This can quickly be achieved by asking what class/grade they're in. If they bring in an assignment that you've done before, go ahead and mention it to relate them, but don't go too far! What we mean is you can tell them experiences and possible strategies you used for the project, but don't say anything content related. Giving them tips on the writing process is great, but don't tell them your views or "answers" on any assignment as it's their paper, not yours, let them tell you their ideas so you both can work on developing them into the paper.

Section 3: Personality Matters

In their quirky and approachable article, “Shaking in Their Boots and Tugging Their Hair,” Amanda Bardales and Jane Abuhani, guide readers through helping students who appear particularly nervous to be in the Writing Center. Their words will likely make you laugh but also help put tutees at ease.

In her letter to tutors, Sarah Bonilla navigates the subtle art of working with reluctant and disengaged students; she demonstrates ways to read these types of students well and to help them loosen up and make good use of your thirty minutes together.

In their article, “The Sound of Silence,” Melina De La Rosa and Kaylor Wragg offer tutors two practical avenues on how to maximize productivity with a quiet, reserved student. Similarly, Marcelo Martir also gives practical advice in “The Quiet Ones,” as he emphasizes a gentle and friendly approach and pushes for tutors to utilize the “Press, Address, Bless” model of tutoring. Lastly, Olivia Baltazar offers a personal connection, identifying with reserved freshmen in particular, as she gives some universal advice to approaching quieter students in “When Tutoring a Shy Student.”

In “What to Do When You Get an Honors/AP Student,” Jennifer Guardado and Lani Sanchez try to allay tutor fears of students in advanced classes by reminding tutors that all writing can be improved and to not be afraid to ask for help if you need it. Finally, Oscar Flores and Nathalie Sibal also reassure tutors that tutoring AP and Honors students aren’t really that different than tutoring everyone else; in their “TED Talk: The Manic Panic Arena – Helping AP and Honors Kids,” they offer experienced advice on common concerns with this type of student and tutorial.

Shaking in Their Boots and Tugging Their Hair
(Nervous and Stressed Tutees)
Amanda Bardales and Jane Abuhani

Hello and good evening. Today we will be walking you through one ever strange and stressful situations in tutoring. What situation may that be? Well it's the very same one you faced your first visit to the writing center as a wee little freshman/tutee. Remember those days? Yes. Those days.

Tutees will walk through the doors in all kinds of states: happy, sad, nervous, stressed, uninclined to be here, and so on. Today's focus will be the nervous and stressed kind. First and foremost nervous. Nervousness is a hard one to gauge and handle but let us attempt to break it down in a few (confusing) steps:

1) Welcome your tutee. Make them feel as though you're a friend. One they trust to read their writing (which can be a very personal thing), and one they can turn to for help.

2) Now that you've made them comfortable enough to sit on the entire chair and not just the edge don't -I repeat- DO NOT jump straight into the tutorial. This person is so nervous they might forget their name and they'll definitely forget your name at least five times; this will also make them nervous. Get a little personal, ask how their day was, if you notice them carrying a book you also like or even read in passing, comment on it. Anything to make them feel less like throwing up on you.

3) Now that you're not afraid of having to learn CPR on the go or washing your clothes in the bathroom sink, you can start the tutorial. Make sure to keep the friendliness up and the give compliments where it's due. Going to the Writing Center has clearly shaken them up; show them it's not scary. Go into the prompt, talk about it, ask what they personally think you guys could collaborate on. Map it out for them so that it's not as scary; they know what's going to happen.

4) Go on with it like any other tutorial, being open, kind, and asking questions so that it's their thoughts on the paper.

Next and probably the one where you'll feel the most like a therapist: stress. You know the feeling, I know the feeling, they clearly know the feeling, we all know the feeling. It's not fun; so make it fun. The steps:

1) How to tell they're stressed. You can try and be Sherlock Holmes and look for clues about their appearance and the glint in their eyes. However, nine times out of ten they'll rush over to you as if you hold the only water bottle at the end of marathon; with their eyes blown wide, they'll seat themselves, look at you and tell you in the clearest way possible: "I'm stressed". And now you have identified the problem.

2) Now remember we are tutors not therapists but it's okay to share empathy and calm them, you can even reference the steps from above. But you can also have them take a deep breathe and explain their worries because it's probably about their writing. Talk about these worries and like before map out the tutorial with them. Having a tangible schedule will calm them immensely. They now know what's going to happen and it's no

longer a stressful situation, they just have to go through the simple steps you've written down. Sometimes they'll still be stressed and worried and that's to be expected, writing isn't easy. If it was, everyone would do it. In this case, just listen to their worries and do your best to soothe them. The best way to do this is share your own experience with them. A time you were once stressed just like them so that they know it's okay.

3) Now that you have a PhD in therapy, you can continue on with the tutorial. Follow the 'schedule' you created with them. Make them laugh throughout the process, even if it's just a smirk.

And now that we've tackled the most nerve racking and stressful tutorials for us as tutors and the tutees we shall leave you with these parting words: be passionate, you became a writing tutor for a reason, don't freak out it'll make them freak out (they smell fear). And lastly have fun, this is an experience you can get no where else; collaborating on a piece that's personal to someone else and connecting over writing can be the most fun process. Don't be afraid to show them what you got but most importantly show them what they got. Good luck guys and happy tutoring!

Dealing With the One Who Couldn't Care Less

Sarah Bonilla

Dear Tutor,

As a new tutor you will encounter numerous types of students. In that sea of students you will eventually come across the reluctant student who couldn't care less about being at the Writing Center and was forced to go because their grade was on the line. Dealing with this type of student will be difficult, but fear not because as you familiarize yourself with the Writing Center and get through a few tutorials you will become an expert in no time.

To begin the tutorial greet the tutee and ask them a few questions to get them loose and help make it easier for them to open up to you. When starting the tutorial, ask them what their piece is about. Take some time to look at the rubric to make sure the tutee is meeting all the criteria. As you go through their piece together and you find the tutee being hesitant and giving you vague responses, ask them follow up questions about their piece and try to build off of their answer. I have noticed that when working with this type of student they become less reluctant the more you engage with them and continue to ask questions.

As effective as this method can be, it does not work 100% of the time as you will find that some students have a tendency to become annoyed and dissatisfied the more questions you ask. If this is the case, ease up on the questions and give them some suggestions, but don't completely stop asking them questions.

Speaking from experience, I have found that the reluctant student will also be the unorganized student. I can recall one tutorial in particular where the tutee was completely unprepared. She could not locate her paper and when she finally found it the tutorial was $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way over which took time away from her session. When I realized the student was having trouble finding her paper, I asked her questions about the piece so that we would not waste as much time. Her disorganization threw me off at first, but I was able to work through that, not reveal my frustration to her, and deliver the best tutorial I could possibly give.

Always remember to be patient, stay calm, and don't let the tutee see your frustration. I know it can be frustrating but remember that it is your job to stay calm and work effectively for the well being of the tutee. It may take a few tries to master but remember you got this! The Writing Center chose you for a reason.

The Sound of Silence

Melina De La Rosa and Kaylor Wragg

When you work as a tutor, you will encounter a wide variety of tutees. For some, the conversation may flow naturally but for those who have a shyer disposition, it may require more work on your part to make a comfortable environment. As a tutor, you can help the situation by having an open, relaxed posture. Small things like angling your chair towards your tutee, or using expressive hand gestures tell your tutee that you are focused on them and make a tutorial more enjoyable. Making sure you ask specific questions related to their work shows that you are listening to what they have to say. However, the most important thing you can do as a tutor when dealing with a shy student is to have empathy for their situation. For some, it may be their first time at the writing center and they are uncertain about the process. For others, they may simply feel awkward about talking to a stranger about their writing for thirty minutes. Regardless, if you can put yourself in their shoes, it would help in choosing what approach to take in your tutorial. Sometimes being open and asking tutees questions about themselves can help diffuse the tension in the beginning but you may encounter someone who is unresponsive. When that happens, you can simply go into the prompt right away.

When dealing with a quiet or shy student, you have two options:

Option #1: Start by first trying to get to know the tutee. Ask questions totally unrelated to the prompt. Examples can range from: “How’s life?” or “How’s school been treating you?” Just remember to not show any signs of discomfort or awkwardness in this situation. Then smoothly transition into working on the assignment at hand. (Only move on until the tutee is able to open up to you.) At any time the tutee happens to go quiet again, simply set aside the task and spark up enthusiasm by asking something totally unrelated to the prompt. (DISCLAIMER!! Don’t get too sidetracked!! Have an end goal of helping the tutee improve his/her writing.) Overall, try to have the tutee feel comfortable enough to talk with you.

(If the overly friendly option fails then try the direct option.)

Option #2: Start by directly asking about the prompt. Don’t try to chit chat too much because that may worsen the situation for those with social anxiety. Instead, have the tutee focus only on the writing prompt. Take on the role of the teacher by giving he/she advice on writing. This type of tutee will learn and improve his/her writing the best by taking notes on the tutorial. So urge them to take notes.

Overall, DON’T FEEL AWKWARD WITH THE SILENCE!!

The Quiet Ones

Marcelo Martir

So, you want to know what to do about the quiet students in the Writing Center? Well, I, Marcelo Martir, will be glad to tell you what is the key factor in making this type of tutorial go smoothly. There are a number of ways that these tutees can appear: some will be tired and not want to talk, some just might not want to be there. Regardless, the key aspect to draw them out of their silence is confidence. Not only should you express this confidence, but you should also make them feel confident about their work.

In what I mean by you, the tutor, being confident, is that you should make a good first impression on the student as they will be relying upon you for assistance for the next thirty minutes to improve their writing skills. You don't want to make them feel uncomfortable or unmotivated to write their paper before they could even receive feedback. So, what should be done is make a good impression right off the bat, perhaps by a smile, a warm greeting, or perhaps a question on how their day went. The quiet students are always a bit more receptive after such introductions, and you may get requests as a result due to being so kind. You want them to feel that warm and comforting atmosphere that the Writing Center is known for, so you can not only help them with this paper but also entice them to come back soon by inspiring confidence in their work.

Speaking of confidence in their work, to draw them out of their shells more so would be to follow the tenets of the writing, "Bless, Press, Address." The first of the three, or the noting of what they had done well in their paper, encourages the tutees the most as it makes them confident on what they did right as well as more receptive to receiving feedback, which the latter two deals with. With this confidence, they can discuss what they wish to improve on more willingly and discuss more frequently with you about any aspect of the paper.

To note, though, while this advice may help in trying to get your tutee to talk with you about their work, it also may not work. Some students are more taciturn and resilient against welcoming behavior. However, don't worry! They are there for quality service from the Writing Center tutors, which you all are. In order to receive the best form of the tutoring, they have to talk; you merely have to be receptive as well to what they are trying to discuss with you. You are just as necessary to listen to them as they are supposed to listen to you. Remember, it is their paper and their words; you merely have to help them organize. We are here to help the students become excellent writers, and, with that, we are to encourage their thought process with our discussions.

Confidence is key in talking with the quiet students, both with you, the tutor, and the tutee, who might just need the extra push to feel comfortable around you. The Writing Center is meant to be welcoming to all students. As long as you try to make it so, you will be able to draw any student

When Tutoring a Shy Student

Olivia Baltazar

New freshmen and sophomores may perceive the Writing Center as daunting - consisting of English connoisseur upperclassmen critical of writing. Although simply a misconception, I admit that I too originally feared the freshman requirement to visit the Writing Center. I purposefully procrastinated my first visit until the end of the semester, finally needing to confront my fear. Upon entering as a shy, scared freshman, I exited as an empowered writer. The welcoming demeanor and environment of the Writing Center Tutors allowed for me to gain confidence in my writing while receiving helpful tips. Although I do not recall the name of my first tutor, I credit her for the success of my current process of specifically adjusting tutorials for shy students.

Important advice any Writing Center Tutor should always keep in mind when leading a tutorial, especially with a shy student, is to curate each session uniquely to their tutee. One of the most essential things to consider at the start of the tutorial - aside from providing tutees with useful writing advice - is how to ensure that they feel comfortable and safe enough to share their writing and thought process. Building the confidence of your tutee in their writing is one of the most fulfilling experiences as a Writing Center Tutor. After all, our goal is to help create more confident, stronger writers here at Downey High School.

When first assigned a tutee, make sure to greet them kindly while inviting them to sit down at your table. First impressions are important, meaning it is your responsibility as a Writing Center Tutor to uphold a kind demeanor. Upon initial introduction, feel free to provide your tutee with some information about yourself, such as which English class you are currently taking, in an attempt to help your shy student feel more comfortable. Encourage them to also share something about themselves in hopes that they reciprocate your efforts to welcome them. If your student is too shy, do not pressure them to into further sharing personal information. It is important that you consciously try your best to avoid making your shy tutee feel more reserved throughout the tutorial. You do not want your tutee to establish a negative connotation with the Writing Center upon their visit.

After initial attempts to establish a friendly introduction, ease into the main portion of the tutorial by asking your tutee to share their concerns regarding their writing. During this, it is especially important to follow the sandwich process - "sandwiching" suggestions with praise - when providing your tutee with helpful advice. As a tutor, you should be careful of your diction choice and of the tone you convey when speaking to your tutee throughout the session. Always remain positive, even though you might feel frustrated at times if your students is still too shy to share their perspective. At the end of your tutorial, make sure to encourage your tutee to always consider going to the Writing Center when in need of another perspective when revising their writing. Even if your tutee still seems shy, do not blame yourself for their reserved actions. Know that you did your best to create a safe environment throughout the tutorial and continue to be optimistic throughout every session.

What to Do When You Get an AP/Honors Student

Lani Sanchez and Jennifer Guardado

It is important to remember that no one is a perfect writer and that writing can always be improved. If you have never taken an honors course, getting an AP student for the first time can be stressful. Regardless of the course level they are taking, people always need guidance.

This situation is very similar to what you should do if you have never had the prompt. Although at first glance it may be intimidating, relax, take a deep breath, and start the tutorial. Don't be timid because of their skill level and take everything step by step.

Writing is a putting yourself in a vulnerable position and there are always things that you as a writer feel insecure about, so start by asking the tutee what *they* believe they should work on. Asking them what they believe they should improve on makes it easier for the tutor to provide help. Taking things step by step will ensure that they follow all guidelines to writing a complete paper that addresses every part of the prompt, and allows them to ask specific questions on something they may need more guidance with. This is a way for both of you to learn more about writing styles and techniques that you can later benefit from.

If you hit a problem or situation that you believe you don't completely understand then don't be afraid to ask one of your fellow tutors or the tutee. There is nothing wrong with asking for help even if you are a tutor. The tutors around you are your friends and if they are not busy they may be able to help you with the situation. In addition, don't be shy or embarrassed to ask the tutee to clarify or further explain something. The writing center is a safe place where we can strengthen each other's writing, and learn together.

TED Talk: The Manic Panic Arena – Helping AP and Honors Kids

Oscar Flores and Nathalie Sibal

Tutoring any student is a daunting responsibility in-and-of itself, so tutoring an AP or Honors student can feel like a monumental task. Difficult? Sure. Terrifying at times? Most definitely. No matter if it's an essay analyzing a character's struggle in *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* or the stressful modes project of APLAC, each essay for higher-level English classes inhabits the same space all other essays do – *The Manic Panic Arena*. This space features, but is not limited to: (1) anxiety of not knowing how to start the assignment and (2) fear of omitting vital elements needed for the essay. It's an area writers from various levels are all too familiar with, even AP and Honors kids. But worry not! Tutorials for highly-developed writers are no different than those for any other sessions. Here are some tips to help out with this fairly stressful, but surprisingly insightful liminal space.

1). Anxiety over Assignment Details

Typically, AP and Honors students have a draft ready to present to you when they arrive for their tutorial. As you get ready to look over their essay, it's easy to fall into the mindset that because they are in advanced classes, their essays will be free of faults – this is not true. Essays from AP or Honors classes are susceptible to errors, however minor they may be. No essay lives up to an ideal “gold standard” – if it did, then there'd be no reason for a Writing Center. Our job as tutors is to fortify and nurture the tutees' writing, and increase our own understanding of the English language in the process. To start off, begin the tutorial by asking the tutee what they want to focus on – this ensures that the session has a central focus and that they hone in on the weaker parts of their writing. Moving forward, ask questions to help expand the tutee's critical thinking skills; it's vital for them to be able to look at the bigger picture rather than fixate on the minutiae of the essay. Lastly, make sure that tutees have a strong, grounded sense of their ideas by the end of the tutorial. Having confidence in one's interpretation helps alleviate some anxiety over the writing process.

2). Fear over Last-Minute Edits

Some writers might be on the cusp of turning in their essay, but are held back by the fear of missing a requirement for the essay prompt. It's reasonable to be doubtful near the final drafts of an essay, so often times when these AP/Honors students arrive at the writing center, it is to streamline their final drafts. This help can take shape through minor edits in syntax/diction or paragraph structure. When aiding students with their final drafts, remember to consistently ask them to elaborate on any points of confusion; they have plenty of ideas, so getting them to talk about their draft isn't that difficult. Reading over their draft one final time will help ease the tutees' fears.

In the beginning, it is common to fear that your advice won't be helpful and/or be futile to AP/Honors students, but don't worry! You were chosen because you're a skilled, knowledgeable writer who has immense potential to help out their peers! After all, we were all once in the *Manic Panic Arena*, nervous that our that our essays weren't good enough. Remember to be kind and patient with all your tutees and good luck!