

Appendix D

For Writing Center Tutors

Getting Started

1. Each session should be no more than 30 minutes. A student may return the following day for additional work, but no one should be seen more than once a day.
2. Students should present tutors with the written assignment. Before tutors begin work, they should read the assignment until it is understood.
3. Tutors should ask students which one or two aspects of the composition process they would like to work on. Tutors are to be pro-active in their work with students, enabling them to take responsibility for their own learning. If students seem unsure of what to do, tutors should ask which aspect of the assignment seems most difficult and begin there, but focus on only one or two issues.

During the Session

4. Tutors should use questions to focus students' attention on their audience, purpose, and thesis. Depending on the nature of the particular problem, tutors should encourage students to think through a resolution of the problem from what they can discover in *The Harbrace Handbook* or *The Office of Assertion*. Tutors should resolve a problem for students only when doing so will elicit genuine understanding.
5. Grammar mistakes often require formal teaching to resolve errors. Tutors may assign exercises from *The Harbrace Handbook* to enable students to identify and correct recurring grammar problems. Tutors can then correct the exercises with students.
6. At each point in the tutoring session, tutors should avoid vague observations on students' writing. ("This sentence does not flow." "The idea is not clear.") Rather, they should offer concrete, language-based diagnoses of specific problems through questions rather than statements. ("Why don't the clauses in this sentence seem balanced?" "How does this paragraph relate to the thesis?")
8. Tutors should distinguish between propaganda and reasoning, especially with controversial topics. Some critical thinking enters into most writing assignments; tutors must allow students to develop their own reasons for their claims whether tutors agree with them or not. If, however, a syllogism is incorrectly structured or if inferences derived from inductive reasoning are incomplete or inadequate, tutors may point these mistakes out and demonstrate the process of reasoning, but at no time should tutors influence students' own thinking. If students ask tutors what they think about a topic, tutors should be Socratic and lead students to their own conclusions.
7. Before the end of the session tutors should have students read out loud the original writing and then the improved work so that by seeing and hearing the difference

students can retain the improvement. Reading aloud will also help students gain a sense of audience.

At the conclusion of the session

8. A pro-active approach to tutoring will encourage weak students to develop confidence in their ability to solve writing problems. One or two problems understood and resolved by the student will do more in the long run than a tutor's proofreading an entire paper.

9. The more precisely tutors can ask questions about the issues students want to work on, the more effective the session will be. Therefore, tutors themselves need to become as familiar with the writing process as possible. When lulls occur in the Center tutors can use the time to improve their own knowledge of the process of writing.