A case study in editing: revising the UWC tutor manual

Amber Bell

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University Honors Program

Capstone Approval Page

Capstone Title
A Case Study in Editing: Revising the UWC Tutor Manual

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Department of English

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A Case Study in Editing: Revising the UWC Tutor Manual

A Thesis Submitted to the
University Honors Program

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Baccalaureate Degree

With Upper Division Honors

Department Of

English

By

Amber Bell

DeKalb, Illinois

Fall 2011
Abstract
This Honors Capstone project sought to complete an editing project using both comprehensive editing and copyediting techniques while demonstrating proficiency in both digital and paper markup. The NIU University Writing Center (UWC) Tutor Manual, the document edited, needed revision to address accuracy of content, organization and accessibility, and grammar and style conventions. After attempting revision, the editing process itself required some revision, and the reflection paper at the beginning of the documentation explains why the proposed editing plan did not work, how a new plan was determined, and what the implications of this experience are on the author and on the process of editing in general. This Capstone includes the original document; versions after each revision, for a total of three; the final product, including the revised Tutor Manual and a separate Client FAQ; and additional work product created through the revision process.
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A Reflective Essay

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Northern Illinois University
Introduction

For this Capstone project, my goal was simple: I wanted to make the UWC Tutor Manual a more user-friendly, successful document. To do so, I would first determine what its flaws were and where improvements could be made to better serve UWC staff; reviewing the document myself as well as interviewing a new tutor and a senior staff member would give me a more complete picture of what revisions would best accomplish my goal. Then, I would work through the editing process in stages to demonstrate how and why changes I made would improve the document. Finally, I would describe the editing process in detail, explaining along the way the rationale for certain editorial decisions, and reflect on the project as a whole (e.g. why the types of revision I suggest are valuable).

However, in working through the process I designed, I found that while my goal was simple enough, getting there would prove to be much more complicated than I envisioned. If time constraints made research difficult, then completing designated tasks within the outlined stages, in the proposed order, was nearly impossible. Instead of forcing the project to adhere to my original plan, I relied on intuition rather than logic to guide my revisions, maintaining only the basic framework I established. Through completing this Capstone, I learned a great deal about the editing process, particularly how flexibility is key.

Proposed Methodology

To begin, I reviewed the Tutor Manual, and I identified three primary causes for concern: accuracy of content, organization and accessibility, and conventions of grammar and style. Then, I determined what steps would necessary to improve on these issues and make the document as a whole more useable.
The first issue was accuracy of content. The Tutor Manual was written in 2008 by a former employee, and then in 2009, Gail Jacky, director, revised it, eliminating 15 pages of material and making small changes to grammar and style (e.g. editing for gendered language). However, following that revision, the Tutor Manual has not been updated to reflect changes in policies and procedures; some have been discontinued or amended, while new ones have been included. The end result is that much of the content is not correct, which may confuse new tutors during training. I planned to address this issue by deleting unnecessary sections, adding missing sections, correcting inaccurate sections, expanding inadequate sections, and creating a new document for important but irrelevant sections; these revisions would comprise stage one and would be edited using digital markup.

The second issue was organization and accessibility. The Tutor Manual is unique in that it is used both as a training aid, so new tutors will read it comprehensively when they first receive it, and as a reference guide, so experienced tutors will occasionally skim it to find specific information. However, it was designed only to meet the needs of this first audience. The Tutor Manual is arranged topically in random order, and because there is no larger structure readers can identify to help them decide where information is located, they have to work through the entire document each time. In addition, because some information is repeated in seemingly disparate sections, it not always clear to readers if they found the exact information desired. I planned to address this issue by dividing up larger sections and creating subsections, compiling and condensing repetitious information, adding appropriate headings and subheadings, including a table of contents, and creating an index; these revisions would comprise stage two and would be edited, again, using digital markup.
The third and final issue was conventions of grammar and style. Although the 2009 revision did correct some errors, the quick editing job was not as consistent as it could have been. Several spelling mistakes and a few repeated grammar errors were not caught. What was most problematic about the document, though, was the style and tone. Stylistic conventions such as passive voice and contractions are not necessarily inappropriate for this type of document; however, as UWC tutors are trained to correct these usages in clients' work—because the former can hinder clarity or encourage wordiness, while the latter is informal—to include such conventions does not model UWC tutoring practice. In terms of tone, the Tutor Manual frequently shifts from formal to what would be best described as overly informal language, and some sections feature negative or condescending language that is not the spirit of the UWC's goals. The combination of all these errors damages to some extent the credibility of the UWC in the eyes of new tutors, which is not conducive to them first reading the Tutor Manual and then following its policies and procedures. I planned to address this issue by correcting spelling mistakes, rewording passive voice constructions, spelling out contractions, fixing pronoun-antecedent errors, making bulleted lists parallel, clarifying ambiguous references, replaces negative language, rephrasing informal language, checking the document for consistent tone, and formatting all visual element for consistency; these revisions would comprise stage three and would be edited using paper markup.

The rationale for completing these steps in this order was straightforward enough. My revision consisted of a combination of two types of editing: comprehensive editing—which evaluates a document's ability to serve the needs of its users and fulfill its purpose in areas such as content, organization, design, style, and accessibility (Rude, 2011), and copyediting—which focuses on the sentence level to ensure correctness, consistency, accuracy, and completeness.
(Rude, 2011). At the UWC, these levels of edit are said to address global and local concerns, respectively. Global concerns, then, because they affect the entire document, should be addressed first; to edit for grammar or style, a local concern, in a given section before the organization and content is finalized might be counterproductive if that section requires deletion or if later additions introduce new errors. Thus, stage one, which dealt largely with content corrections, and stage two, which largely dealt with organization, needed to be completed before stage three to avoid doing unnecessary work or creating extra work.

**Challenges and Revised Methodology**

Unfortunately, the actual revision process does not mirror exactly my proposed methodology. Despite the seemingly solid logic behind my design, it did not work well in the real world, and I had to revise my planned revisions. While I could have completed the tasks as outlined in my proposal, it would have required more work, and, more importantly, the project would not have provided the same educational benefit. By working through the process, revising and re-revising my edits until the procedure worked, I learned more about how one should edit in general and why it makes sense to adapt the editing process to each project to yield the best results.

One challenge I faced was the sheer size of the document. Although the UWC regularly uses the 2009 revision, a digital copy was only available for the 43-page original document. In a way, this seeming setback had a secret benefit: I could compare the two documents to see what edits had been made, which would demonstrate what information the UWC found more or less useful, and I would able, if I so chose, to reintroduce something that had been deleted if I thought it would helpful now. In addition, I would be to show how much my revision improved on the
latest revision in comparison to its improvement on the original document. However, this volume of information caused a few problems.

My first step in stage one was to delete any unnecessary sections; this task was completed quickly and painlessly, largely because I deleted most of the sections that the 2009 revision deemed obsolete. I was also able to separate the Client FAQ and make it into a separate document, complete with revisions to content, organization and accessibility, and grammar and style. However, when I attempted to complete the other tasks in stage one—correcting, adding, and expanding—I found them either to be impractical or unfeasible. The reason is simple: an editor cannot divorce content corrections from those for organization, not entirely. Because I had not complied and condensed repetitious material, I could not be certain if a section was inadequate and required more detail: perhaps in another section that information is clearly explained. Because I had not re-divided and reorganized the sections, I could not tell if a section was missing and needed to be added or if it was merely misplaced. Without first adding and expanding all the material, I would not likely catch all the necessary corrections either.

Instead, what I found worked better was to delete the unnecessary sections first, then reorganize, and finally apply formatting changes in this round of editing. By completing these three steps before trying to finalize the content (i.e. essentially completing most of what was originally stage two first), I ensured the document was more manageable in terms of size and ease of editing; with all similar information grouped in a given section and each section organized to make identifying inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and incompleteness easier, content corrections were much easier. This round of editing, inspired by a new, more flexible process, is referred to as Revision One to differentiate it from the stages I proposed originally.
REVISING REVISIONS

For Revision Two, I completed the remaining tasks in what was stage two, the content corrections, as well as everything in stage three, the grammar and style corrections. The reason for this was two-fold. First, it made sense to correct mistakes as I saw them instead of hoping to remember them later; I was working through each section, reading carefully and with an eye for accuracy, so to ignore errors for the sake of adhering to a plan seemed like a waste of time.

Second, if I were to catch most of the errors in Revision Two, I could do essentially two revisions for grammar and style, and the final revision, Revision Three, would not be solely responsible for all copyediting errors; rather, it would be an extra safeguard.

This new methodology does not, at first glance, seem to be the most logical because tasks are not all similarly grouped. However, it worked for the Tutor Manual, and I believe a similar structure would work for other projects as well. The only restriction on the editing process is one of basic importance: complete all comprehensive editing, whatever that entails, before copyediting. Global concerns need to be addressed before local concerns; what the editor gets to play around with is the order of tasks within these two categories.

To review, the following chart summarizes the primary differences between my proposed and revised methodologies in terms of the editing process. Additional changes are explained in the Project Limitations section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. stage one: accuracy of content</th>
<th>1. Revision One: organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• delete unnecessary sections</td>
<td>• delete unnecessary sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• add missing sections</td>
<td>• create new document for important, but irrelevant sections</td>
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<tr>
<td>• correct inaccurate sections</td>
<td>• condense repetitious material into one section</td>
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<tr>
<td>• expand inadequate sections</td>
<td>• divide up larger sections</td>
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<tr>
<td>• create new document for important, but irrelevant sections</td>
<td>• add appropriate headings and subheadings</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. stage one: organization and accessibility</th>
<th>2. Revision Two: content, grammar, and style</th>
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<th>1. Revision One: organization</th>
<th>2. Revision Two: content, grammar, and style</th>
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<td>• delete unnecessary sections</td>
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<td>• create new document for important, but irrelevant sections</td>
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<td>• divide up larger sections</td>
<td>• divide up larger sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• add appropriate headings and subheadings</td>
<td>• add appropriate headings and subheadings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• include a table of contents</td>
<td>• include a table of contents</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
REVISING REVISIONS

- divide up larger sections
- condense repetitious material into one section
- add appropriate headings and subheadings
- include a table of contents
- create an index
- add missing sections
- correct inaccurate sections
- expand inadequate sections
- Correct spelling mistakes
- Reword passive voice
- Spell out contractions
- Fix pronoun-antecedent errors
- Make bulleted lists parallel
- Clarify ambiguous references
- Replace negative language
- Rephrase informal language
- Check document for same tone throughout
- Format all visual elements to be consistent

3. stage three: grammar and style
- correct spelling mistakes
- reword passive voice
- spell out contractions
- fix pronoun-antecedent errors
- make bulleted lists parallel
- clarify ambiguous references
- replace inflammatory or negative language
- rephrase informal language
- check document for same tone throughout
- format all visual elements to be consistent

3. Revision Three: final proofread
- Proofread for spelling, grammar, and consistency errors

Project Limitations

Due to time constraints, both on my behalf and that of the UWC staff, I was not able to complete formal interviews with either a senior staff member or a new tutor. I feel these omissions will not noticeably affect my project for three reasons. One, because I am a peer tutor at the UWC, I understand which policies need clarification and which do not; I know what information would have been helpful when I was a new tutor, and I know what information I still need to reference now. Two, because we all work together closely and talk about our sessions with each other, sometimes venting and sometimes offering advice, I know what other UWC
tutors want and need. Three, because I informally interviewed both the senior staff before the
semester began to get a head start on the Capstone project, I know what they want as well. Their
only request is that policies be updated to reflect accuracy; any other editorial decisions were left
up to me. Therefore, after discussing policies with them over the summer, I now have a firm
grasp of what the UWC believes and how it should run, so I am confident that I will meet their
expectations.

Another notable omission not mentioned in the revised methodology is the index. After
reorganizing the Tutor Manual, which now features two broad divisions (i.e. Tutoring
Information and Employment Information) with up to three levels of subdivisions per topic, I felt
information would be easy enough to find without an index, especially since there is now a table
of contents. Add to that the fact that the Tutor Manual is now approximately only 30 pages,
creating an index seems a little silly.

Finally, to protect the UWC, all forms moved to the Appendices are not included in the
drafts. The feedback forms in particular should not be available to the general public.

Discussion

After completing this Capstone Project, it seems reasonable to conclude that apart from
performing comprehensive editing before copyediting, there are no set rules for organizing tasks.
Instead, being flexible and letting one’s intuition regarding the demands of the project guide
one’s editorial decisions is best. By acknowledging that the document was too large to work with
easily, I was able to determine that cutting out unnecessary materials and condensing repetitive
material were both good ways to make the document more manageable for the next step.
Likewise, by acknowledging that it is counterproductive to separate tasks such as content
correction and grammar and style revision when both require close reading, I was able to save
time and allow myself an extra step to look over my edits one last time before submission. I have learned that it is not so bad to include many tasks within one step; dividing them up by topic, as I did, or into many topics, which I also did, may seem smart, but in the long run, it is not conducive to easy editing and may even require more work than is necessary.

This knowledge is incredibly valuable to me because I would like to work as an editor after graduating college, and now I know a little bit more about myself and my editing style, as well as how to best approach the editing process. I think had I followed the proposal to the letter, it would have been much more difficult, and perhaps the outcome would not have been as good. Similarly, if I had not had struggled to revise my plan, if I had avoided re-editing the document until a clear plan emerged that I could demonstrate through digital markup for the purposes of the Capstone, I would have had to learn this lesson later when time and circumstances would not be so forgiving.
References


Bibliography


UWC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
(amended Summer 2008)

THIS is your binder. In it you will find tips to help you tutor successfully, including advice, handouts, and more. Additionally, this is meant to be a space for you to keep any supplemental materials.
Table of contents
Consultant information

In this section you will find information geared specifically for you, the writing consultant.

This part of your manual is designed to help you tutor more effectively. Hopefully, the information will answer questions or concerns you might have in regard to tutoring.

The information in this section is not for the clients.
Introduction

Welcome to the University Writing Center (UWC)! It takes a certain type of person to want to be a writing tutor. You were selected because you have a passion for talking about language use and stylistic challenges in writing, you are compassionate and comfortable with all kinds of people and ability levels, you understand that it is impossible to be a successful college client without at least a basic proficiency in writing, and you want to help the UWC clients attain that proficiency.

What That Means. What does this mean for the clients who use the Center? As our brochure states, we are available to help clients become more proficient at writing with any type of project, both personal (e.g. resumes, application letters) and academic (i.e., any class or assignment). Some specific things we as consultants can do to address clients’ needs are

- demonstrate strategies for prewriting
- help to organize thoughts or paragraphs
- teach self-editing/self-proofreading
- demonstrate revision tactics
- illustrate the documenting of sources using the proper format
- identify clients’ writing strengths and weaknesses

What It Does Not Mean. We do NOT proofread papers. Nor do we “fix” them. Why not? Those actions won’t help clients in the long run. To simply change a comma to a semi-colon for them will never teach them how to use commas and semi-colons. Additionally, “fixing” their papers minimizes the clients’ ability to claim sole authorship, which is akin to plagiarism. To ensure that clients’ work is always their own, we conduct client-guided sessions. Through dialogue (talking with each writer about his/her strengths and challenges), we actively engage writers in a process of learning writing-related skills to apply to a broad range of future endeavors rather than to just meet the needs of a particular assignment. We attempt to answer clients’ writing questions, sometimes using their own work as an example, and encourage them to practice what they’ve learned. Our goal is to help clients become better writers, and to do so we facilitate learning by making sessions client-focused, not just paper-focused. Remember: No client is going to leave the center with a perfect paper, but they should leave with more knowledge of writing. 😊
Who uses the center?

Anyone affiliated with the university may use the center. Our clients range from traditional freshmen to graduate clients to faculty and staff to alums and people from the community; from first year composition clients to art majors to economics majors. We tutor both individual clients and groups. Additionally, we have a large population of English Language Learners (ELL) clients.

**English Language Learners** – While all clients are individuals with individual learning issues, there are some issues common to ELLs as a group, these include article use, denotation/connotation, vocabulary, word forms, proposition use, verb tenses, and more. There are a number of handouts to help you address these issues, but really working with ELLs is similar to working with native English speakers. In both instances, you should tackle higher-order concerns first (fulfilling the assignment, organization, etc.) and then attempt to explain the lower-order concerns. Occasionally, some ELL clients will want to practice their pronunciation and conversational skills with you. These are usually fun sessions, just make sure to be patient, enunciate, and have a dictionary handy.

**Learning Disabilities** – There are a number of learning disabilities that affect writing skills, including familiar ones like dyslexia and not so familiar ones like expressive language disorder. Some signs of a learning disability might include difficulty in reading or writing, with memory, with attention, with comprehension, with logic/reasoning, and with social cues.

We are not allowed to ask if a client has a learning disability. If they themselves are aware of it, it is their choice whether or not to disclose it; some will, some will not. If you suspect that a client you are working with has an undiagnosed or undisclosed learning disability, there are resources available for both you and, most importantly, your client, and you should contact Jodie or Gail as soon as possible after your session. You may provide information about the CAAR office or counseling services, but you may not tell the client to go or directly contact the resource about a client.

**Groups** – Sometimes you will be assigned to tutor an entire group of two or more clients who collaborated on one paper. This is a special challenge, but again, not that much different than a “regular” session. If you get a group and the paper was written collaboratively, make sure all the members of that group are present. If the paper was written in sections with one author per section, you can only go over those sections whose authors are present. We can’t teach someone who isn’t there; it borders on plagiarism.

Additionally, when you complete the paperwork for a group, staple the draft to just one of the feedback forms and write “draft attached to ______’s form” on the other feedback forms. When you put the forms/draft into the In Box, do not staple all of the documents together because each person counts as a session and Jodie and I do not always know to look for multiple feedback forms stapled together. Remember sessions potentially equal funding!!!!
Tutoring: What to do

These policies and procedures are designed to address some of the questions that may arise while you are at work. Of course, they are not all inclusive, so feel free to ask questions as needed. Our door is always open.

Schedule/Time off

- Design a schedule that will be consistent all semester. If you need to change, it isn’t as problematic with the electronic system, but you may already have appointments scheduled. Shifting appointments is not always as easy as it might seem.
- Set your schedule so that you can arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of your shift to allow time to settle in and be ready to begin.
- If you need to take a day(s) off, let Jodie or Gail know as soon as possible. We will be happy to block out your times and shift appointments if possible. Please do not just call or email that you are not coming in. While we realize that conflicts can occur at the last minute, if you are booked, you are responsible for those sessions.
- If you are going to be late, call so we can make adjustments or let the client know you are on your way.

Arriving at the UWC

- Put your belongings (purses, backpacks, etc.) in the kitchen or grad office. There are hangers in the kitchen. While we have only had a few problems with belongings walking off, it is better to be safe than sorry.
- Check your schedule (however, do not interrupt if someone is productively working on the main reception desk computer). Check the schedule periodically throughout your shift (especially if you are going to run to the computer lab or upstairs to get food); you may have additions and/or cancellations.
- If you have an appointment coming in, stick around so the receptionist does not have to come find you. However, do not block the traffic pattern around the desk. The clients have to sign in and the students/faculty moving in and out of the classroom will need space to walk without interrupting the sessions.

Being here

- If you are not in a session, you may work in the kitchen/break room, grad office, at one of the tables (if we are busy, try not to take up more than one table – your stuff on one and tutoring at another), on the computers in the back, or go to the computer lab. However, keep an eye on the clock so you can be ready for the clients when they arrive. The receptionists shouldn’t have to come find you each time.
- You may conduct your sessions in the front or back area, depending on where you and the client feel most comfortable. You may also use the conference room if it is available. If you are working with a group, the back tables or the conference room are probably more practical since those options are usually quieter and offer more space to spread out.
- If you leave during your scheduled time, make sure you let the receptionist know where we can find you if your client comes in and you aren’t back.
Beginning a Session – On the occasion that you have a client (and there will be many such occasions), greet them pleasantly, tell them your name, ask what they’re working on, and sit down with them. You may sit either at the front or back tables, or at the computers, whatever suits your needs and comfort level. After spending a couple of minutes getting to know the client and what s/he is working on, the first things to do are always just basic administrative ones: ask the client to fill out the first parts of the Feedback Form (see examples of both the short and long forms) and if they’ve brought two copies of their draft. We ask clients to bring two copies so they will take their own notes on their copy and we can keep the copy with the tutor’s comments. This promotes ownership of the revision and the session for the client and keeps session records for us. If they only brought one copy, explain our policy, write “no copy” on the feedback form, and then put your pencil down. It is now up to them to take notes. Finally, ask them if they have any materials relating to the assignment from their teacher (prompts, rubrics, texts, etc.). Try to first establish if they understand the assignment and then what their writing concerns are.

Assessing a Client’s Needs – It may be an oversimplification, but it is helpful to separate clients’ writing errors into two major categories:

- **higher-order concerns (or global errors)** – organization of ideas, thesis development, and whether one sentence logically follows the preceding sentence
- **lower-order concerns (or local errors)** – verb tense, comma use, and spelling errors.

Higher-order concerns should be addressed first, if for no other reason than because it might not do a client any good to change a comma if s/he needs to eliminate the whole sentence.

Sometimes, what a client tells you s/he needs help with differs from what you believe to be the main writing issue. S/he might believe that s/he just needs help knowing when to use pronouns, but you notice that s/he has no clear thesis and that the paper is all over the place. Similarly, some clients have more issues than you think you can conceivably cover in the allotted time. In both of these cases, kindly and honestly explain to the client what you believe are the issues and do the best you can.

- In the first scenario, tell the client that while his/her pronoun use is something you will want to work on if you can, for this particular paper you are more worried about the lack of a thesis, and it might be in his/her best interest to start there. Remember: You can always ask him/her to come in for another session if s/he is that worried about pronouns.
- In the second scenario, tackle higher order concerns first, then errors that are the most recurring. If, after you’ve discussed a solid organizational scheme for the paper, you notice that the author just doesn’t know how to use it’s vs. its, then find a number of those examples in the paper and teach the client the correct way. Then have him/her identify the error and self-correct. Encourage him/her to make another appointment and explain clearly what you are seeing. Make sure that s/he knows about his/her specific writing issues—for instance, you tell him/her that next time you want to definitely work on agreement and transition usage. If for some reason s/he doesn’t get to work with you, then s/he still has something concrete to tell the tutor s/he does work with.

Reading Aloud – From a practical standpoint, you cannot assess a client’s needs without reading a sample of his/her work. There are different ways to do this, and every tutor has a different strategy. However, at some point in the session (unless you are just brainstorming), you will want to do some reading aloud. Why?? Because this is the best method to help clients self-identify lower-order concerns. Ask if they would like to read or if they would like you to read; either way, it is often easier
to “hear” a goofy sentence than to see it. When they stumble over one, you can address it with them at that point.

Sometimes, especially when a client says s/he is having trouble knowing if the paper flows or where to put paragraphs, you might want to scan it quickly before you do any reading aloud (this can be done while the client is filling out the paperwork). That way you can assess if, indeed, higher-order concerns should be addressed first. For instance, if you discover that your client’s paragraphs are lacking any sort of rhyme or reason, you may want him/her to gloss each paragraph individually, coming up with a one or two word summary of each. Then, help him/her retroactively construct an outline and fit each paragraph where it logically should go. Finally, after reordering the paragraphs, you might want to start reading aloud.

Remember though, whatever you do and whatever you talk about, the client MUST take his/her own notes!

Ultimately, the best way to assess a client’s needs is to a) understand what the teacher wants of them, b) hear what their own writing concerns are, and c) read the paper and draw conclusions based on your professional judgment.

Goal Setting – Be honest with yourself and the clients about what you can do in the allotted time. If they have signed up for a 25 minute session and brought eight pages, tell them (kindly) that you will more than likely not get through that amount of text, that even in the best case scenario, most 25 minute sessions only get through 3-4 pages, and give them the opportunity to make an additional appointment. Another thing that will help them (either at home or in future sessions) is if you can identify specifically their common errors and explain them – even if these end up being things you do not have time to address. Remember: **We are not miracle workers. We cannot turn a D paper into an A paper, nor should we!** All we can do is try to teach our clients something that they hopefully use—and eventually, over the course of time, they will have enough knowledge and confidence about writing to compose those A papers from the get go. **WE DON’T “FIX” PAPERS, WE MAKE BETTER WRITERS** – based on Stephen North’s (1984) concept.

Tutoring Skills – After assessing your clients’ needs and setting goals with them, the only thing left to do is tutor! Tutoring is actually more fun than most kinds of work and comes naturally to most people. All it really takes on your part is the ability to talk about writing and the writing process (which you all have), the ability to assess a client’s writing needs (which comes with practice), and

- **The Ability to Listen**—Listening is crucial. The Writing Center is a service that is offered for the clients to help them accomplish their goals. To this end, we want the clients to guide their own sessions by telling us what their concerns are. In some cases, they know their issues already, and we need to use listening as our primary assessment tool. Also, in most cases, they know the subject they are writing about better than we do, and we have to listen to them and defer to their knowledge about the field.

- **The Habit of Modeling**—Modeling is using your writing as an example of good scholastic behavior. Not a single one of us has ALL of the answers; when you get stumped by a question from your client, look at it as an opportunity to model good client behavior: ask a peer or boss, use reference books, look something up on the internet. If you admit that you don’t know what a word means (or how to spell it) and pull out a dictionary, your clients are all the more likely to pull out their dictionary next time they get stuck on a word.

- **Be Tactful, but Honest** – Clients need to know honestly what their writing issues are. Too many are never told in clear language just where their troubles lie. You will often hear the generic “grammar” as a client’s answer to the question about his/her writing concerns, and then discover that it’s not “grammar” per se, but that s/he keeps switching tenses. You want to tell him/her this, but you need to use tact. It does no one any good to be scared
away by rude, insensitive consultants! To the client above, say: “You know, I’ve noticed a couple of things about your paper that are grammar-related, but really the biggest thing I see and what I’d like to spend the most time on is that the verb tense shifts from present to past and back to present. Here’re some examples of what I mean.” Don’t be cruel, don’t pick on the client (either his writing or his person), don’t “grade” him/her (it’s not your place as a peer), and don’t say things that aren’t constructive. Instead, be tactful, compassionate, empathetic, but honest about the issues you see.

• **Pick Your Battles** – There is absolutely no need or reason to argue with a client. Nothing we do is worth raising voices over. If s/he absolutely refuses to hear what you are saying about an issue that you think is important (repetition, for instance), simply move on to something else. Ultimately, this is his/her paper, and if you’ve presented your concerns tactfully and honestly, it is his/her choice whether or not to follow your advice. If it is not just a certain piece of advice s/he is not interested in and the client strikes you as being overly-resistant and not interested in being in session in the first place, please see the section on resistant clients.

**Keeping Track of Time** – This is very important, especially during the “busy seasons” of midterms and finals. If a client is signed up for 30-minutes, end the session at the 25 minute mark to give both of you time for paperwork. Similarly if a client is signed up for an hour or 90 minutes, end ten minutes early (at the 50 or 80 minute mark). That leaves time to fill out the paperwork, make any copies you need to, put reference materials away, etc. It’s our instinct to want to help a client as much as we can, right up until the last second, but if you get behind, you may cheat another client out of a full session in the process. If you are working a 4 hour shift and you have 8 clients, each with thirty minute appointments, you can see how every minute is going to be valuable to each of them. This is also a good reason not to be late.

**Ending a Session** – Before it is time to end the session, tell the client you are going to have to wrap it up and ask if s/he has any more questions. You may want to also briefly list the issues you discussed in session and see if s/he is comfortable with what has been learned. You both need to fill out the rest of the feedback form and you may need to copy and stamp it as proof of the visit. Ask if the client is interested in making another appointment (or suggest it, if you think it is warranted) and walk him/her to the appointment desk. Wish him/her luck and put the feedback form (with your copy of their paper stapled to the top of it) in the In Box.

**To Stamp or Not To Stamp** – Make sure you ask if the client needs a copy of the paperwork for his/her teacher. Often, clients are required to come by their teacher, who may want proof. If this is the case, make a copy of the Feedback Form, stamp the **COPY** (not the original) with the stamp located on the front desk, fill in the color of the stamp and the date in pen, put your initials after the date, and give it to the client. Then staple the original to your copy of their work and place it in the In Box.

**Dealing with a Scary Subject You Are Unfamiliar With** – The first (or second or twenty-fifth) time you work with a graduate student, a paper on biophysics, a report on APA, or a discussion of 17th century philosophy, you may feel overwhelmed, lost, maybe even a little bit “stupid.” But rest assured we have all felt that way about some session we’ve worked on. Remember, we hired you because you are bright, intelligent, witty, and charming. You can do this. You are a prepared reader/responder.

Don’t be afraid to ask questions of the client. Don’t be afraid to tell him/her you know nothing about biophysics or 17th century philosophy – ask for some background. If you are lost, just ask questions
and help the client clarify the explanations. Generally the client will be very happy to discuss the project. Encouraging clients to articulate their ideas helps them think through what they are saying and how they are, or perhaps should be, saying it. And, frankly, you do not need a firm grasp of economics to help a client work on his/her project. His/her grasp of language in the document should help you understand the topic. We all have a comfort level — but don’t be afraid to reach beyond it.

**Not Doing a Session** — The only legitimate reason for not doing a session is if the client brings in a draft for a class you are also taking. In this instance, let a member of senior staff know right away so the session can be switched to another consultant.

If you are uncomfortable working on a paper of a particular topic, talk to Gail or Jodie. While we will do our best to accommodate you, this may not always be possible. Remember, your job is to act as a prepared reader/responder, and as such, you are providing feedback that may help the client understand that not every audience will agree with his/her position. See the “Grin and Bear It” article, located in the articles section of your binder, for tips on how to do this.

**Exams** — Unless we have explicit permission from the instructor or department, if a client comes in with an exam, we may not talk about content or idea development and support, citations, etc. You cannot even tell the client whether the ideas make sense or are well organized. You may only discuss grammar and mechanics and identify general problems with citation style. If there are exceptions for some classes, Jodie or Gail will notify you.
Feedback forms

NOTE: The feedback forms are necessary for our recordkeeping purposes (for our annual database and ultimately our funding reports), so it is very important to complete all of the information correctly. If Jodie and/or Gail have to take the time to find the information, it needlessly extends the data entry process. Additionally, if the client needs a copy for proof of the visit, it is important that the information accurately reflects the session.
Tutoring process
by Ildikó Carrington

- Have the client sum up what s/he wants to accomplish in the draft and how s/he has developed it. You will often find the client has more specific concerns and questions than those indicated on the feedback form. It is a good idea to prompt the client to discuss what s/he feels the draft’s strongest points are. If the client says “everything needs help!” try to get him/her to narrow down his/her biggest concerns.

- Ask the client to read the draft or parts of the draft aloud. While reading, the client should recognize how to take ownership of his/her own draft. Often the client will find and correct editing problems independently so you do not have to point them out. Then you can spend more time on higher-order concerns, such as development, organization, revision of confusing passages, and audience awareness. We ask clients to read aloud so they can begin to recognize and catch the types of errors being made. Generally, when we read silently on a computer screen or a hard copy, we miss a lot of mistakes.

- As the client reads, take short notes on your copy of the draft (if you have one). You may decide to stop at the end of each paragraph, each page, or you may have the client read the entire draft depending on its length and the length of the session. Your notes will help you focus on the client’s concerns (e.g., “You were worried about organization. I noted that I could follow your main idea for the first three paragraphs, but I became confused in the fourth paragraph and got lost in the fifth. Maybe we should return there and see what is happening.”).

- Try to prompt the client to talk about the concerns you see in the draft rather than pointing out directly what you think needs work. Asking questions helps the client become involved in critical reading and thinking – e.g.
  - What was your intended purpose?
  - Why did you choose that quotation?
  - How do you think someone might disagree with your point here?
  - Which of your sources might help you to support this idea?
  - How could you further develop this idea?
  - Where in the draft might it be more effective to ask these questions?
  - Who might benefit from reading this paper when it is finished?
  - How else could you say this?
  - What connections could you make between paragraphs? sections?
  - What might be a more effective word choice? tone?

- Always encourage the client to write notes, outlines, ideas, etc. The client should leave the conference with something s/he can refer to later. However, if the client is not writing anything, stop writing and put down your pencil. DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES MAKE A COPY OF THE UWC DRAFT FOR THE CLIENT OR GIVE YOUR NOTES TO THE CLIENT! THEY ARE THE PROPERTY OF THE UWC (CONSIDERED WORK PRODUCT) AND ARE USED TO MONITOR HOW WELL WE DO OUR JOBS.

- If you do not know the answer to a client’s question, ask another consultant or check the UWC resources. We have all been stumped – and the best way to figure something out is to ask! No one expects you to know all of the answers – and sometimes, if you talk over a drafting problem with the client, you can figure it out together. Asking questions models
writing as a collaborative process. Remember it is better to seek out an answer than give a wrong one!

- It is important to help a client talk about what s/he knows or has read when creating the document, especially if the draft deals with a subject area or discipline you are not familiar with. In explaining the ideas/concepts to you, the client may think about how to develop and/or improve the document.
Tips for a successful session
by Megan Worth

A wide variety of students and even faculty within the numerous disciplines come into the UWC on daily basis. Our diversity of clients essentially works to ensure that you never quite know what to expect. This can be especially nerve-wracking. So here are a few tips for helping your sessions run more smoothly.

- Try to establish a friendly rapport with your client at beginning of the session. First time clients are often nervous because they don’t know what to expect. It is important to put them at ease. Even when someone has been here countless times before, establishing this rapport will go a long way.

- Collaborative interaction is key in the UWC. Reading aloud helps this type of interaction greatly goes a long way towards involving both of you. Engage your client as much as possible – after all, it is their draft! Prompt them when you see good opportunities. Ask your client: “How would you reword this sentence? How can you reword this idea to make it clearer?” Above all, do not sit there and do all of the work for them. You are not here to fix their papers – you are here to help them improve their writing.

- Do not let your client make you feel like you cannot help them. You wouldn’t be working here if you weren’t capable! Additionally, do not be afraid to consult other resources: another consultant, handout, book, etc. Your client will appreciate that you are making the extra effort to answer their question. It does not reflect badly on your skills as a consultant at all.

- Prepare yourself for the possibility that your clients think they can keep the copy you are writing on. Head off a potentially disgruntled client by explaining our policy at the start of the session – and do not be surprised if you have to repeat yourself sometimes. Be firm. Clients will often engage in the session more if they know from the start that they will only have their copy and notes to use later.

- If your client wants to focus on something in particular, but you notice another more glaring concern, tell him/her. If s/he wants to work on grammar, but the organization of the paper leaves you lost, it is often beneficial to shift direction. Make sure that the big picture is in order before narrowing the scope (sometimes, this may mean recommending the client come for another session).

- Do not hesitate to model a change for your client, but do not help him/her with the changes verbatim. Phrasing that works well could be: “You could say something along the lines of…” Clients will often catch on when you model a change and will apply it beyond that one particular circumstance. If the clients try to be sneaky and have you repeat your suggestions so they can write it down word-for-word, engage them in their own modifications instead of simply giving in.

- As the session time starts to run out, keep an eye on the clock (try sitting where you can directly see it). It is often helpful to tell your client that you have ___ minutes left. Sometimes they have something in particular they will want to look at before the session ends. It also alerts them to the session’s impending end and erases the surprise of “Time’s up!” and the begging to just finish one more paragraph.

- It is not likely to happen often, but from time to time, clients are difficult and it may get to the point the session comes to a standstill. Difficult clients have, sometimes, even asked if they can work with someone else. If this happens, do not panic. Go find Gail or Jodie and see what you can or should do.
Helping clients become better writers

Talk about Clients' Specific Concerns – While many of our clients are unsure of what their writing issues are, many of them DO know and may have been having these same problems for years without ever being taught how to correct them. If a client, even casually, says that s/he has never understood how to use a comma or always confused their/there/they’re, this is an opportunity for learning. If a client comes in and says “I don’t know how to write a thesis statement without using ‘I,’” this is an opportunity for learning. Sometimes it’s as simple as not knowing the difference between the plural and possessive; sometimes it’s as big as not understanding what an argument consists of, but if we don’t ask or don’t listen, we’ll never know. Anytime clients express a concern over a specific area, we can help them improve in that area, we can give them more confidence in their writing, and we can help them to become better writers.

Encourage Continued Learning Outside the Center – Along the same lines, if clients have trouble with run-on sentences, encourage them not only to come back to the center to work on their run-ons but also to do some of that work on their own. To this end we have a number of helpful handouts in your binder. Every once in a while, you get a client so excited s/he has finally figured out a concept that s/he does go home and work on it more. Additionally, handouts work well for people who like condensed forms of reference. A handout on run-ons might be consulted over a grammar book that might be thick and intimidating. Our handouts on transitions and citations also act as this type of reference and encourage good scholastic behavior. The clients can look up what they need to know without having to do it in a book that might be confusing to them.

Repeat Tutees: Ask Them to Demonstrate Previously Learned Skills – One of the true joys of tutoring is working with repeat clients: people who come to you week after week. It is in these clients that you can see progress and can witness better writing over time. One of the best ways you can help them in the context of the session is to casually ask them to demonstrate skills that they’ve learned in other sessions. You can say things like: “Remember when we talked about comma splices? I see two in this paragraph.” Reinforcing previously learned concepts and having them demonstrate their new skills gives them practice so they eventually become habitual. Internalizing writing rules makes better writers.
Non-standard sessions

Walk-Ins – If you are the scheduled Walk-In consultant, treat it as you would any other 25-minute session. However, be especially conscious of time, as usually when there is one walk-in, there are many. Please do not go over time, even if no one is waiting. If your client needs more assistance, help him/her to make another appointment, and be sure to provide a copy of our brochure with our phone number on it.

Online – Online sessions are an entirely different breed of cat (see the following page for the online tutor’s cheat sheet). The fact that the tutee is not sitting right in front of you can make it both easier and more difficult. You may be able to just whip through and explain the concepts they need to learn and throw some examples at them, but you’ll never know if they understand those concepts or if what you told them made sense to them. Essentially, online submissions are just client papers like any others, but there are just a couple things to keep in mind while commenting on them.

1. You shouldn’t really spend more than 20 minutes reading and assessing an online submission. Online submissions are only supposed to be 3 pages; if you receive one that is too long, stop when you get to that point and explain that you did so. Encourage them to come to the center.

2. Try to identify between one and three things to discuss: either major problems or frequent small ones. Just like a regular session, start with higher-order concerns and progress to lower-order ones. Give examples.

3. Be tactful in your discussion. It is easy to misunderstand someone’s tone over email, so when responding, remember that the client might not get a joke or sarcasm. Be honest but tactful. Finally, you need to have either Gail or Jodie log you onto the email to send your response.
Online tutoring tips
by Ellen Thornton

We know that online sessions can sometimes be a bit of a challenge. After all, it’s hard to know exactly how to respond to someone who isn’t there to discuss his/her writing! The tips offered below were brainstormed by your co-workers and have proven to withstand the angst of tutoring online.

To make the process easier:
1) Limit your reading time to 20 minutes and read quickly.
2) As you read, make notes for yourself on the draft. You won’t have time to go back and re-read. When you get to 20 minutes, stop – no matter how much (or little) you get through.
3) Take 10 minutes to compose a response in a word document. Ask Jodie or Gail to log you on to the UWC account and paste your message into the email and send it off.
4) We don’t need to review what you work – we trust you and the advice you give.

To make composing responses easier:
   a) Choose 1 or 2 higher order concerns (lack of thesis statement, poor organization, plagiarism, etc.) and focus on those in your comments.
   b) Feel free to provide a link to the OWL or a similar online source the student might find helpful. Ex.: I noticed you have several mistakes concerning APA in text citations. If you visit http://uwc.niu.edu and click on handouts, you’ll find a helpful APA explanation.
   c) Model a change for a student (i.e. In paragraph 2, the sentence that begins “According to recent research on guinea pigs the average life span is 7.6 years” – you lack a comma after the introductory phrase – “According to recent research on guinea pigs, the…” Keep an eye out for places where you need this type of comma). If you model a change once or twice, you are not helping the student plagiarize. You are offering suggestions for (in this instance) comma usage.
   d) If you think the student would benefit from an in-person session, by all means suggest this in your response.
   e) Even though we ask for an explanation of the assignment, we don’t always get one. In this case, do the best you can. Mention in your comments that lack of an assignment prompt makes your comments general in nature.
   f) Don’t forget to sign your name at the end of your response.

Keep in mind that your responses during online sessions really will be much more general than you can provide in a face-to-face session. That said – make sure you do not do the following in your online sessions:
   ✗ stress out about not getting to everything (you generally won’t and that’s okay)
   ✗ edit
   ✗ read longer than 20 minutes or spend longer than 10 minutes composing your response
   ✗ freak out when you realize your online submission is 15 pages printed out. It states very clearly on our website that online submissions should not be longer than 3ish pages and that we’ll only spend 30 minutes per draft

If you have any questions or concerns about responding to online submissions, please don’t hesitate to ask Jodie or Gail for help and/or advice!
Problems

Resistant Clients – Sadly, there will always be those clients who are resistant to tutoring for a variety of reasons: they feel they do not need help, they feel stupid or embarrassed, they resent being required to come, or they feel it’s a waste of their time. Generally, these sessions can be very frustrating experiences for consultants, but it is worth keeping in mind that the clients may not understand the process. Thankfully, sometimes we can identify these situations and still have a productive session.

Identifying Resistance: You will be able to easily spot the following resistant client traits:

• they do not take notes,
• they don’t speak or are argumentative,
• they talk excessively about things not related to the session or to writing in an attempt to distract the tutor, or
• they ask the tutor to do their work for them.

All of these behaviors are obviously contradictory to a productive session, but also to our mission as consultants. So what can we do about them?

Handling Resistant Clients: There are a couple of tricks you can try to draw out resistant clients.

• You can try talking of other subjects besides school for a bit and then try to casually bring them around to the subject of their paper.
• You can try a version of the silent treatment: ask the client a directed question and silently wait them out until they answer.
• You can be forward: tell them you feel like the session could be going better and ask them if there’s anything wrong.
• You can gently remind them that this is their paper and their grade on the line, and while you want to help, you can’t do that unless they participate.
• Finally, you can always offer to reschedule. Let them know that you understand that it’s hard to be productive some days. If you do reschedule, also let them know that their next appointment doesn’t have to be with you.

Ultimately, it is up to you to decide what technique you think will work best in a given situation, and it is your decision how best to use your personality, kindness, and/or sense of humor to help. If you do encounter a resistant client (and everyone does at some point), please talk to your mentor, Gail, or Jodie to get the experience off your chest.

NOTES:

1. If someone is openly hostile, verbally or physically harassing, or otherwise threatening you, be it client, peer, teacher in the smart classroom, please let Gail or Jodie know right away.
2. If the client tells you s/he is only interested in the getting the feedback form and does not actively participate in the session, write the following statement on the feedback form prior to copying/stamping the form: “The client was only interested in securing the feedback form and was not actively engaged in the tutoring process.”
3. Further tips for dealing with resistant clients can be found in the following articles “Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers” and “Telling Tutor Tales,” which are included in the article section of your binder.

Plagiarism – If you suspect a client has plagiarized (often you will notice a tone change and a change in the level of language in these cases), address the concept openly WITHOUT MAKING AN ACCUSATION. You can simply ask, “Are these your words and ideas are they based on some of your
research?” Most clients don’t intentionally use other peoples’ work, or sometimes they simply don’t understand the rules of citation. This is something we can definitely help them with—and it will help them all throughout their college career. Technically, the client has not committed plagiarism until the document is turned in for a grade; therefore, we cannot turn him/her into his/her instructor/professor. We can, however, help the client learn how to document accurately and explain (not threaten) the potential consequences for the first offense: minimally failure of the assignment and possibly failure of the course, with documentation submitted to the Judicial Affairs Office as part of the client’s permanent record. If it is not the first offense, the client will probably be academically dismissed from NIU.

For future reference, the NIU ENGLISH DEPARTMENT’S STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM is a representative sample for the university in general.

NIU English Department’s Statement on Plagiarism

Clients faced with the task of writing a paper are sometimes tempted to borrow facts, ideas, or phrases from other writers as an aid to their own expressions. While it is possible to do this in an acceptable manner, the beginning writer in particular should be aware of the dangers of straying into the area of plagiarism. PLAGIARISM, SIMPLY DEFINED, IS TAKING SOMEONE ELSE'S WORDS OR IDEAS AND REPRESENTING THEM AS BEING YOUR OWN. It is specifically prohibited by University regulations, which state:

Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any client to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Clients are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Clients are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Clients guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university. (Undergraduate Catalog, p. 47)

The essence of plagiarism is theft and misrepresentation. One who plagiarizes is attempting to get credit, in the form of a grade, for someone else's work; in effect, he or she is doing the same sort of thing as copying another person’s answers on an exam. Thus guilt or innocence in plagiarism cases is not a matter of how much material was stolen or what the motives of the thief were. Any material which is taken from another writer and presented as if it were the client's own original work comes under the prohibition.

Specifically, the following are examples of plagiarism:

1. A paper or assignment actually written in whole or part by another.

2. A paper or assignment copied word-for-word or with only minor changes from a book, magazine, or other source.
3. A paper copied in part from one or more sources, without proper identification and acknowledgment of the sources.

4. A paper which is merely a paraphrase of one or more sources, using ideas and/or logic without credit, even though the actual words may be changed.

5. A paper which quotes, summarizes or paraphrases, or cuts and pastes words, phrases or images from an Internet source without identification and the address of the Web site.

Notice numbers 2, 4, and 5. Direct quotation is not the only kind of plagiarism. Taking someone else's ideas, judgments or logic, even if you put them in your own words, is as unacceptable as stealing the words.

This does not mean that outside sources may never be used. Some subjects and some assignments require research and the quotation of other writers' work. But all such use of outside materials must be properly identified, through quotation marks, internal citations, endnotes, and/or other accepted ways of acknowledging such borrowings. It is not the use of an outside source that is wrong; it is the implicit claim that any material obtained in that manner is in fact original.

Nor does this mean that every single fact that you learn from some outside source must be documented. Material which is general knowledge or generally available from many sources (such as dictionary definitions, familiar historical facts, and the like) need not be identified; a reader assumes that you got the information somewhere. In most courses, facts drawn from the textbook in that course (but not the author's judgments or conclusions) are fair game. But it is always better to err in the direction of over-acknowledgment: when in doubt, identify your source. Better yet, unless the assignment requires research, rely on your own knowledge, ideas and words.
Interpersonal relations in the UWC

Clients and You – The consultant/client relationship is a unique one. You are their peers, not teachers, but still you are imparting knowledge to them, and at times that can feel strange – especially to clients who are required to come here. You can alleviate this awkwardness basically by being yourself – open and friendly – but at the same time, professional. You do not have to reveal any personal information about yourself other than your name. If you’d like to use yourself as an example, however, to illustrate a writing concept, and if it is appropriate, that is your prerogative. Similarly, while you want to listen to your clients’ needs, and sometimes it is helpful for them to get some things off their chest, you are free to guide the conversation to the task at hand (writing) at any time. Sometimes conversations that are not about writing can help break the ice, loosen clients up, or help them refocus their ideas, but at the same time it is important to remember why you are both there. There is information in this binder on what to do if a client is resistant to tutoring. If a client tries to discuss inappropriate things with you, threatens you, or makes you uncomfortable, see Gail or Jodie right away. You will be asked to document the experience – minimally for UWC records and perhaps for the Judicial Affairs office.

Teachers and You – There is an invisible third person present at every session, the client’s teacher. It is s/he who gave the assignment and s/he who will be judging the work. Often, we are required to interpret the teacher’s assignment, meaning, handwriting, etc. for the client. Remember NOT TO CRITICIZE the teachers, their comments, or an assignment. That limits their credibility in the eyes of the client and will, in turn, lessen the effort that client will put into assignments. Do your best to help the client fulfill the assignment based on your own knowledge of what has been assigned. If the client is confused by a concept or forgot to write down something the teacher said, encourage him/her to check the Blackboard or WebBoard, to email the instructor, or to drop by during office hours. Again, helping clients become successful in college includes encouraging good scholarly behavior, and developing relationships with their professors is one very good way of doing that.

Fellow Consultants – As was mentioned at the very beginning, you all have some special qualities in common with each other or you would not be here – a love of writing, the desire to help others, the understanding and compassion it takes to do so, and a comprehension of how important writing is to success in college. Because of those similarities, we hope that you will all be able to get along and that some of you may develop life-long friendships, but all we ask is that you be courteous, respectful and kind to your fellow consultants. If there are any disagreements among you, please see Gail or Jodie to discuss it.

Gail and Jodie – Please feel free to come to us with any questions at any time – even if we are in a session. We are nice. We care. And chances are at least one of us has been there.
Workplace morale
by Megan Worth

Lessons from *Fish!*

“There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself.”

Workplace morale is a tricky thing – it frequently ebbs and flows. Even the UWC is not immune to this. However, in our jobs as consultants, we need to do all that we can to keep morale high. Attitudes are infectious, and if we seem less than thrilled to be here, our clients may begin to act the exact same way! A potential morale *buster* at the UWC is feeling ineffective. Perhaps you’ve had several lackluster sessions in a row that leave you feeling like nothing more than a “tutor-bot.” Maybe you’re going through a period in which you feel shaky about your abilities. Either way, with low morale, you have the very real potential to be a less effective consultant.

It is difficult to maintain enthusiasm sometimes, especially if it has been a long day and you are starting to feel burned out on session after session. It is easy to feel this way; however, as noted in *Fish!*, it is extremely important that you remain *present* and *fully engaged* in your work. Do not become a consultant who is only half there during a session. Your client is likely to notice, and even if s/he does not, you will know the difference.

“Create energy and goodwill.”

One great thing about the UWC is the atmosphere. This is a huge morale *booster* because a place with life in it is, by far, a more enjoyable place to work. It is hard to beat a work environment where you are among friends. When you like coming to work, it reflects in all facets during your shift. Time will pass quickly, and you will value what you are doing more. You can be serious at work and still have *fun* at work. When you balance the two, your morale is likely to stay steady and high.

Mentoring and being mentored

Each new tutor will be assigned a mentor, an experienced tutor. This person will be the one you can ask questions, vent to, and/or tap for resources throughout the semester. In reality, we are ALL available for such things and you should never hesitate to ask us, but if you would like a go-to person who is familiar with your strengths and weaknesses as a tutor, then your mentor will be there. Initially, the new consultant will watch sessions performed by the mentor and other UWC consultants, and then s/he will be observed conducting a session. After training and discussing the session with the mentor, the new person shall be “loosed upon the public at large.”

New consultants will meet with their mentors on a weekly basis the first semester and will write a status report. You and your mentor can go through the following mentorship agreement together.
Meetings

We will have meetings this semester covering various topics relating to the tutoring of writing. Consultants are required to attend. These meetings will also serve as a forum for discussing problems we’ve encountered in our sessions: how to draw out that quiet client, identifying the most effective brainstorming technique for your client, what to do when you feel rushed, etc. Because of differing schedules, we will hold each of the meetings twice – once on __________. You may decide which day you’d like to attend, but you must attend. The tentative schedule for meeting topics is as follows:
While working in the UWC, new consultants may discover something - tutoring helps the consultant develop as a writer as well. We spend countless hours each semester tackling a large variety of papers. We often encounter things that we never would have thought about otherwise and discover new methods of writing, researching, etc. A great deal of this development comes from the collaborative nature of our sessions. We may be tutoring our clients, but whether we realize it or not, we often learn something from them. Maybe you will find a new way to organize your ideas or perhaps you will see a new method for revision. According to a writing consultant at the University of Missouri-Columbia:

The variety of writing processes and thinking processes that peer writing tutors see offers a chance to reconsider our own methods as students...Undergraduate tutors and writing centers have a mutually beneficial relationship: writing centers offer peer tutors a variety of experiences that can aid their development as students, and undergraduate tutors bring a useful dynamic to the writing center from their experiences in the classroom.1

A writing consultant from Duke University noted, “I am certainly more consciously aware of things like organization, paragraph structure, and reader-centered prose. Things that were once mostly intuitive for me I can now think about more objectively as I revise, imagining my reader instead of focusing only on what I want to say.”2

Being a UWC consultant places you in a unique position – you can, quite literally, see things from both sides of the table. Take advantage of it!

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Employee performance documents

Self-evaluation
At the beginning and at the end of the semester we will provide self-evaluation forms that will ask you to evaluate yourself as a writing consultant. The initial reflection is to identify any areas you think you would like to work on throughout the semester. The final reflection, obviously, is your assessment of your performance throughout the semester, including those ideas you wanted to investigate, improve, work on, etc. You should definitely all be able to confidently and honestly spout your virtues by the end of the semester (even if you are hesitant at the beginning of the semester) because if you HAVE had any problems, you will have discussed them with your peers, your mentor, or Jodie or Gail and figured out the best way to handle any concerns.

Observation/NIU work performance report
At some point during the course of the semester, you will be observed by Jodie, Gail, or a designated graduate assistant. This isn’t meant to be scary, threatening, or Big Brother-ish; it is simply the best way to accomplish three things:
• to see how effective our training is,
• to see if there are areas we need to discuss with you personally,
• to see if the level of tutoring is fairly consistent from tutor to tutor.

Policy violation
On the rare occasion that a UWC policy is violated by an employee, a formal written report will be drafted. After three written violations, the employee will be terminated.

NOTES:
1. See the next pages for copies of the employee performance documents
2. Copies of any and all documents will be given to the consultant as well as kept in his/her UWC personnel folder.
Special projects

There are a number of special projects and services that the Writing Center offers for consultants interested in participating/leading. These include

- **WC Service Presentations** – In which the consultant goes to individual classrooms armed with knowledge and brochures to introduce the UWC to a whole new batch of clients. If you love the UWC and think you can confidently speak of its virtues in front of a large group, please see Gail or Jodie to volunteer.

- **WC Seminars/Topic Focused Presentations** – Periodically throughout the course of the semester we will be giving seminars about topics that are of frequent interest to our clients: how to write resumes/cover letters, how to write a statement of purpose, what belongs in a personal statement, what an APA paper should look like, and things of that nature. If you have special knowledge of these or any topic you think would be helpful for our clients and if you are interested in sharing that knowledge, please see Gail or Jodie.

- **Newsletter** – We will produce the *University Writing Center Compendium*, the UWC newsletter, twice a semester. You may be asked to contribute, individually or collaboratively, an article, drawing, etc. Melissa is our resident editor.

- **Handouts** – It is helpful to have a collection of handouts (hard copy and/or electronic) to share with the staff and the clients, so from time to time, you will be asked, or you could volunteer, to develop information that explains some facet of writing in a particular genre or disciplines or tips on how to navigate components of the writing process.

- **TAILS** – Some of the UWC staff has been making weekly trips to TAILS, the local humane shelter, to play with the animals and to write their adoption bios. You might be interested in joining the group. If so, see Jodie.
We try to have a student receptionist at the front desk at all times, but sometimes it is impossible. That means whoever is free should sit there to help out by making appointments and answering the phone. The desk should not be unattended. If you are working at the desk and a client comes in for you, attempt to find someone free to cover the desk at that time. If all else fails, we do have voicemail.

Making Appointments and Adding Clients to the System – If you are working the Front Desk, the most frequent question you will be asked is “Are there any appointments available for such and such date?” This is a very easy thing to find out. Our calendar will be open on the front desk computer; if not, see the Customer Appointment icon on the desktop. It will show a breakdown of the current day and who is available (see image). If you need a different day, simply go to the calendar in the left-hand sidebar and click on that day (however, please remember to click back to the current day when you are finished).

To make an appointment for someone who is ALREADY IN THE SYSTEM: Right click on the time they are interested in coming, click on “add appointment” from the pop-up menu, locate the client in the directory (type in the beginning of the first or last name if s/he has been there before and highlight the name) and make sure you insert the correct time (30, 60, or 90 minutes). NOTE: A 90 minute appointment requires permission from a senior staff person or the person conducting the session and is limited to graduate students and/or faculty. Finally, in the “notes” section, type what the client is working on and confirm the appointment (see screenshot of the appointment calendar).

If a client is NOT IN THE SYSTEM (ask, to be sure – if they haven’t been in since June 16, 2008, then they aren’t in the system), click on the “add client” button in the top left hand corner of the spreadsheet screen (see image), then fill out the information requested by the pop-up. After you’ve added the client to the system, feel free to make the appointment for the time they’ve requested (if it is available). Confirm the appointment and make sure you remind him/her to bring two copies of whatever s/he is working on and whatever the teacher gave to aid in explaining the assignment.

To make a repeat appointment, click on

Answering the Phone – If the phone rings, answer it in the following manner “University Writing Center this is (insert your name), may I help you?” If the caller is seeking an appointment, follow the same procedures as above.

Taking Messages – If the caller is looking for Gail or Jodie and neither is available, just take a message and leave it in the mail pouch on the main office door. If you take a message for anyone else, put it in the appropriate mail pouch on the kitchen door.

Retrieving Messages – If the voicemail/message light is blinking, pick up the receiver, press the message button, and, when prompted, enter the mailbox code “#” and the password “123456#.” Then take the messages and disperse them as needed (to appropriate mail pouches) or return the call to schedule requested appointments.

Greeting Clients and Alerting Consultants – Although we do have student receptionists, it may be necessary for you to staff the front desk. Working the front desk makes you the first person clients see when they come in. Greet them, be nice, and ask if you can help them. If they need an
appointment, follow the method above; if they already have an appointment, ask them to sign in, give them a feedback form (the long form for new clients, the short form for repeat clients), and let their consultant know they’ve arrived.

**Filing** – Occasionally, you may be asked to file folders of client records. The drawers are on the wall between the Graduate Assistants’ office and the kitchen, are in alphabetical order, and are marked with the letters contained therein. File the documents in the back of the folder, so they remain in chronological order within the folder.

**Walk-In Policy** – If you are working the desk and a walk-in time is on the schedule, determine how many slots are available. Since each walk-in slot can only be 25 minutes, a two hour scheduled walk-in time will consist of four spots. When clients walk in, put their name on the sign in board. The biggest rule for walk-ins is that those interested in a walk-in appointment cannot leave the center after they’ve been put on the list – otherwise it is not a walk-in anymore! Some clients will choose to wait long periods of time for a walk-in appointment; these clients can use the UWC computers (if any are available), crash in one of the chairs, or work at one of the tables in the back (if any are available), but again, they may not leave and come back!
Miscellany

General UWC information

- **Writing Center Hours** – The Writing Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday thru Thursday. We are closed on Fridays and during school holidays.

- **Phone Number** – Our main phone number is 815-753-6636. The office number is 815-753-4499. Our fax number is 815-753-4111.

- **Web Address** – Our web address is http://uwc.niu.edu/ and our MySpace and Facebook pages can be accessed from the website. Online submission information, directions to the UWC, contact information, and helpful handouts are also found there.

- **Where We Are Located and How to Get Here** – We're located in Stevenson South, Tower B, Lower Level.

- **Directions from I-88 with a parking pass** – Exit at Annie Glidden and go north to Lincoln Highway/Route 38. Turn left and pass by Dollar Video, Taco Bell and several apartment buildings. At the water tower, turn right onto Stadium Drive. The road curves to the right. Take the first left onto Stadium Drive West and drive north. Yellow, blue, and brown permit parking is allowed on the east side of the street. Blue and orange parking is allowed in the two lots. (Blue permits may park in orange spaces.) We are in Stevenson South – the series of white towers north of the baseball field/basketball courts.

- **Directions from north with a parking pass** – Take Annie Glidden Road south to Lucinda. Turn right on Lucinda. At stop sign (a T-intersection), turn left and follow the road around the football field to Stadium Drive West. Turn left on Stadium Drive West. Yellow, blue, and brown permit parking is allowed on the east side of the street. Blue and orange parking is allowed in the two lots. (Blue permits may park in orange spaces.) We are in Stevenson South – the series of white towers north of the baseball field/basketball courts.

- **Directions for those without parking permits** – Unless a client has a parking permit, parking can be somewhat of a challenge on this side of campus. Therefore, we suggest that, when possible, clients should park in the Visitor Lot (near the Library) and take either a Circle Left or Circle Right bus from the west side of the Student Center to get to Stevenson South.

- **Smart Classroom (SSWC) Rules** – No food or drink (including coffee and water) are allowed in the classroom. We appreciate your help in keeping an eye on this. Although there are signs posted everywhere about this rule, students and faculty still like to think it doesn’t include them. It does.

- **Computers** – If you look around, you’ll notice that we have quite a few computers in the UWC. These are for you to use with your clients, but you are (of course) free to use these as long as no client is waiting for one. We do ask, however, that if you are on the internet, please use common sense as far as the content of the websites you are visiting.

Do not download materials to these computers, unless you are working with an emailed document. In this case, if you just save the document without designating a specific place for saving it, it will
save as a template and be extremely difficult to retrieve, even if you have revised or edited it.
When you are opening an emailed document, save it to the desktop or to the student folder (if there
is one on the desktop), work on the document, and then minimize it while resending it in an email.
Once it is successfully sent, close the document and drag it to the trash.

- **Printers** – We do not have printers for client OR tutor use. There is a 24-hour computer lab on the
other side of the stairs. To print in the computer lab, clients will need to have an NIU OneCard to
swipe before retrieving the printed documents.

  NOTE: We do not have any control over the computer lab – including the printers. On rare
occasions, we have gone over to help a client figure out a problem. But is it very rare.

- **Copiers** – We do not have a budget to make copies of consultants’ or clients’ papers or non-UWC
documents. If you want to make copies of some of the handouts in this binder to give to the client
or copy the feedback form for the client’s professor, then the copier in the main room is available
for such purposes.

- **Telephones** – Because we have to start keeping better records of our long distance/off campus
phone calls, we have instituted a phone log (next to the main computer on the reception desk). If
you make or return a call that is either long distance or off campus, please fill in the Phone Log
information. Please do not make personal long distance/off campus phone calls from the UWC
phone.

- **No-Show and Late Tutees** – The UWC No-Show Policy: If a client misses three appointments,
without calling to cancel, s/he may only use the walk-in services for the rest of the semester. If a
client is more than five minutes late for a 25 minute session or 10 minutes late for a fifty minute
session the appointment may be cancelled – especially if there are people waiting or we are very
busy. These policies are posted in the center, but may need to be explained to clients from time to
time.

- **Exams** – If a client comes in with a written exam, we cannot discuss ANYTHING but
grammar/punctuation. Any discussion of content, theses, organization, etc. is not allowed—
otherwise we are the ones taking the test! If there are exceptions, Gail or Jodie will let you know.

- **Paperwork** – Feedback forms (and the correct completion of them) are the consultants’
responsibility. If a client is new to the center (or has not been in since the beginning of summer
school of the current academic year), s/he needs to fill out the long form; if s/he has been in during
the academic year, s/he can fill out the short form. Before your client leaves, make sure that all of
the information on the feedback form is filled in – teacher’s name, course information, etc. This
helps us understand who is using the center and why – think funding and saving Jodie and/or Gail
data entry time.

**Personnel Information**

- **Checking Your Schedule** – Finally, as mentioned at the very beginning of this information, it is
your responsibility to know when your clients are scheduled and to be prepared for them, so check
the schedule, and check it often.

- **Down Time** – Occasionally (especially near the beginning of the semester), there will be time
when you are scheduled to work that you don’t have clients. In this event, ask if there is anything
that needs to be done; we may need help at the desk, with filing, in the kitchen, or in creating handouts, newsletter articles and/or seminars! If it is a really slow day, feel free to do your homework. In fact, consultants hard at work studying is a good scholastic behavior to model for our clients.

• **Calling In Sick/Emergencies/Coming Late** – We understand that everyone gets the sniffles, gets stuck in traffic, has family emergencies, and sometimes just spaces out. And while we try to be accommodating in these circumstances, please be aware that sometimes it simply isn’t possible. If you are sick or going to be late, by all means call and we will try to shuffle your clients to other consultants, but know that you are ultimately responsible for covering your shift if we can’t make enough adjustments.

• **Leaving work** – If you are a peer consultant or a student receptionist, make sure you write in your hours on the timesheet before you leave work every day. This will help immensely when it’s payroll time.
  
  If you used any dishes, etc. in the kitchen or brought them into another area, please clean up before you leave. You might also browse the appointment schedule to see what your next work day looks like.

• **Leaving early** – If you finish early, do not just leave without first asking if there is anything you can do (walk-ins, online sessions, filing, reception, etc.). Chances are good that we will let you leave early, but do not just disappear. Make sure your time card reflects the time you actually leave.

• **Mailboxes** – Your personalized mail pouches are located on the kitchen door, alphabetical by your last name. Please check them frequently as that is where you will find your payroll information and, of course, unbelievably important memos, notes, etc.

• **Payroll** – Pay periods are from the 1\textsuperscript{st} of the month to the 15\textsuperscript{th} and the 16\textsuperscript{th} to the end of the month. Paydays are the 15\textsuperscript{th} and the last working day of the month, or whatever working day is closest to the 15\textsuperscript{th} and end of the month. (Good luck figuring that out)

• **Kitchen Stuff** – Feel free to use what you need to in the kitchen, but PLEASE clean up after yourself. That means doing your own dishes, wiping up spills on the counter or in the microwave, and turning off the oven and coffeemaker when you are finished using them. Do not let your food sit in the fridge until it becomes a science experiment. We’re a writing center not a chemistry lab!!!
  Also do not put food down the sink. The garbage disposal does not work, so the sink will back up (not a pretty sight and not worth the plumbers rolling their eyes at our inability to follow directions). On the plus side, the coffee and tea and miscellaneous foods on the shelves are for all to share, so help yourself!

• **Problems/Concerns/Gripes** – If at any point you have a problem of any kind, either with a co-worker or a client, you should contact Gail or Jodie immediately. Our door is always open (unless it is closed, in which case knock first please). We take your concerns seriously and want to do what we can do to ensure a positive, friendly, and professional workplace.
Frequently asked questions

1. **Where are you located?** We're in Stevenson South, Lower Level, toward Tower B. There are signs in Stevenson to help locate us.

2. **How much does it cost?** Nothing. It is free!

3. **Do I need to be an NIU student?** Students, faculty, and staff must be connected to NIU. If it someone from the community inquiring, a member of the senior staff needs to take the call – sometimes we do make exceptions.

4. **Can you answer a quick question over the phone?** Simply state that we have a policy against tying up the phone line answering session-related questions. Try to get the caller to schedule an appointment or have him/her send the question via online submission or visit our MySpace or Facebook pages.

5. **Can I do a session over the phone?** No. Simply state that we have a policy against tying up the phone line answering session-related questions. Try to get the caller to schedule an appointment or have him/her send the document via online submission or visit our MySpace or Facebook pages.

6. **Is this the Writers' Workshop?** No. That is in DuSable and only for students enrolled in the CHANCE Program English classes. The number is 815-753-0272.

7. **Is there another writing center on campus?** No, we are the only general population writing center on campus. There is an ESL (English as a Second Language) lab in Reavis. The number is 815-753-6637.

8. **I don't have a parking permit, so where can I park?** There is no permit-free parking near the UWC. We suggest parking in the Visitor Lot in central campus (by the Library) and taking Circle Left or Circle Right bus from the Student Center to Stevenson South.

9. **I have a parking permit, where can I park?** There is parking for yellow, blue, and brown on Stadium Drive next to the baseball field. Orange and blue can park in the lots west of Stevenson. There are some pay spots in front of the Recreation Center at the corner of Lucinda and Annie Glidden Road.

10. **How much is a parking fine?** The fine is $40.00 for a regular spot and $500 for an accessible spot.

11. **Which bus is the fastest?** If you are coming to the UWC from the Student Center or DuSable, take the Circle Left. If you are coming from Barsema or east campus, take the Circle Right. Conversely, if you are leaving the UWC for DuSable, take Circle Right. If you are going to Barsema, take Circle Left. Reverse the process when you leave.

12. **Can I drop off my paper and pick it up later?** Clients must actively participate in the session, so they may not just drop off their
papers to be “fixed.” We are not a laundry service. Clients are expected to sit down with us as we help them identify their strengths and challenges and discuss strategies for improving their writing.

13. **Can I get a really quick appointment, like only 5 or 10 minutes?** Very rarely do we ever get a session that takes only 5 or 10 minutes. Students really do need to sign up, minimally, for a 25 minute session. If we finish early, we finish early. No one is forced to stay.

14. **My paper is really short. I only need a 25 minute session.** Again this is a red flag. Ask how long the paper is. We generally get through 3-4 pages in a 25 minute session. If the paper is longer, they should sign up for at least a 50 minute session and perhaps more than one appointment to ensure they can get through everything.

15. **Do I really need an appointment?** Yes. Maybe not so much at the beginning of the semester but certainly as the semester goes on and we are booked up. It is better to have one or two or three appointments scheduled that you can cancel than not have one at all.

16. **If I’m here waiting for walk-ins, can I run to the computer lab or my room or the cafeteria or outside to smoke?** No. The policy states that if you are waiting for a walk-in session, you have to wait in the UWC. We do have computers, study areas, comfortable chairs, and washrooms.

17. **Can’t I just take my coffee or water in the classroom?** No. None of the computers are insured, so if they are damaged we are out of luck.

18. **Hey, I’m a client, but I’m over in the computer lab and the computers/printers aren’t working. Can you help?** We don’t have anything to do with the computer lab. That is ITS. The number is 753-8100.

19. **I’m in class right now, but I have to reset my password. Can you help?** We can’t, but the student may use our phone to call the password reset number 753.8100.

20. **Can I meet with a consultant when you’re closed or outside the UWC?** No. If you want to schedule an appointment with a UWC consultant, you need to come in during our regular weekly hours.

21. **I only want to work with a graduate student or faculty member.** When possible, we can try to accommodate a client’s request to work with a graduate student, instructor, or member of the senior staff. However, that is not always possible. Assure the client that our peer consultants are smart, intelligent, friendly and prepared. We would not have hired them if we didn’t have faith in them.

22. **Will you sign this sheet my professor gave me to prove I was here?** No. However, we will provide a copy of the feedback form, which has all the relevant data from the visit. The form is dated and stamped, so the professor will know exactly when the client was in and what happened during the session.
23. **I can’t get in, so can I just pick up a feedback form because my professor requires that we come in?** No! No! No! Clients have to be here and actively participate in the sessions. Giving them a feedback form when they haven’t been in is cheating.

24. **How long does a session take?** It depends on the paper, the assignment, the client. We suggest, especially for first time visitors, that clients make a 50 minutes appointment. Then they can gauge how much time they think they’ll need for follow up visits. Better to have too much time than not enough.

25. **So I know you just told me the UWC is booked and I can’t get an appointment for three days, but can I just come in anyway and wait?** No. Clients really do need to schedule appointments ahead of time. Chances are if we are so busy clients can’t get appointments for day, our consultants, if they have a random few minutes to spare, need to rest, relax, and regroup before their next session.

26. **I know you’re all booked, but can you just take my number and call me if there’s a cancellation?** Again, no. It would be too chaotic to try and keep track of who called when and for what. Clients need to realize they really should book ahead.

27. **Can I bring in a paper for a friend?** No. The writer must be present to go through the whole document or else it’s a form of plagiarism. The friend is taking down suggestions for the writer. If the writer then takes the suggestions, s/he is taking the friend’s, or yours, ideas and passing them off as his/her own.

28. **I am part of a group, but the other members can’t come. Is it okay if I just bring in the paper?** No. All of the writers must be present or else it’s a form of plagiarism. We may go through only the sections written by those present. The group member is taking down suggestions for the writer. If the writer then takes the suggestions, s/he is taking the group member’s, or yours, ideas and passing them off as his/her own. Additionally, do not buy into—we wrote it all together or I wrote it all for the group.

29. **How do I submit via email/online?** Visit our website at http://uwc.niu.edu. Click online submissions and follow the directions. Online submissions have up to a 48-hour turn-around; if papers are submitted Friday after 12:00 or any time over the weekend, the 48 hour period begins on Monday morning.

   Clients need to be aware that approximately 25 minutes are spent on each online submission; therefore, we do not encourage submission of long assignments. Furthermore, students enrolled in English 102, 103, 104, or 105 may not submit paper for these classes online.

30. **I sent my paper via email, how do I get a feedback form?** Just print out the response. That will work the same as the form.
Handouts for clients

The handouts in this section of your manual will help you and your clients work through a variety of writing concerns. You will find information about higher and lower order concerns, documentation cheat sheets, explanations for punctuation, tips on how to write in some disciplines, etc.

The handouts in this section may be copied for clients.
UWC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
(amended Summer 2008)

THIS is your binder. In it you will find tips to help you tutor successfully, including advice, handouts, and more. Additionally, this is meant to be a space for you to keep any supplemental materials.
Consultant information

In this section you will find information geared specifically for you, the writing consultant.

This part of your manual is designed to help you tutor more effectively. Hopefully, the information will answer questions or concerns you might have in regard to tutoring.

The information in this section is not for the clients.
Introduction

Welcome to the University Writing Center (UWC)! It takes a certain type of person to want to be a writing tutor. You were selected because you have a passion for talking about language use and stylistic challenges in writing, you are compassionate and comfortable with all kinds of people and ability levels, you understand that it is impossible to be a successful college client without at least a basic proficiency in writing, and you want to help the UWC clients attain that proficiency.

What That Means. What does this mean for the clients who use the Center? As our brochure states, we are available to help clients become more proficient at writing with any type of project, both personal (e.g. resumes, application letters) and academic (i.e., any class or assignment). Some specific things we as consultants can do to address clients' needs are

- demonstrate strategies for prewriting
- help to organize thoughts or paragraphs
- teach self-editing/self-proofreading
- demonstrate revision tactics
- illustrate the documenting of sources using the proper format
- identify clients' writing strengths and weaknesses

What It Does Not Mean. We do NOT proofread papers. Nor do we “fix” them. Why not? Those actions won’t help clients in the long run. To simply change a comma to a semi-colon for them will never teach them how to use commas and semi-colons. Additionally, “fixing” their papers minimizes the clients’ ability to claim sole authorship, which is akin to plagiarism. To ensure that clients’ work is always their own, we conduct client-guided sessions. Through dialogue (talking with each writer about his/her strengths and challenges), we actively engage writers in a process of learning writing-related skills to apply to a broad range of future endeavors rather than to just meet the needs of a particular assignment. We attempt to answer clients’ writing questions, sometimes using their own work as an example, and encourage them to practice what they’ve learned. Our goal is to help clients become better writers, and to do so we facilitate learning by making sessions client-focused, not just paper-focused. Remember: No client is going to leave the center with a perfect paper, but they should leave with more knowledge of writing.
Who uses the center?

Anyone affiliated with the university may use the center. Our clients range from traditional freshmen to graduate clients to faculty and staff to alums and people from the community; from first year composition clients to art majors to economics majors. We tutor both individual clients and groups. Additionally, we have a large population of English Language Learners (ELL) clients.

**English Language Learners** – While all clients are individuals with individual learning issues, there are some issues common to ELLs as a group, these include article use, denotation/connotation, vocabulary, word forms, proposition use, verb tenses, and more. There are a number of handouts to help you address these issues, but really working with ELLs is similar to working with native English speakers. In both instances, you should tackle higher-order concerns first (fulfilling the assignment, organization, etc.) and then attempt to explain the lower-order concerns. Occasionally, some ELL clients will want to practice their pronunciation and conversational skills with you. These are usually fun sessions, just make sure to be patient, enunciate, and have a dictionary handy.

**Learning Disabilities** – There are a number of learning disabilities that affect writing skills, including familiar ones like dyslexia and not so familiar ones like expressive language disorder. Some signs of a learning disability might include difficulty in reading or writing, with memory, with attention, with comprehension, with logic/reasoning, and with social cues.

We are not allowed to ask if a client has a learning disability. If they themselves are aware of it, it is their choice whether or not to disclose it; some will, some will not. If you suspect that a client you are working with has an undiagnosed or undisclosed learning disability, there are resources available for both you and, most importantly, your client, and you should contact Jodie or Gail as soon as possible after your session. You may provide information about the CAAR office or counseling services, but you may not tell the client to go or directly contact the resource about a client.

**Groups** – Sometimes you will be assigned to tutor an entire group of two or more clients who collaborated on one paper. This is a special challenge, but again, not that much different than a “regular” session. If you get a group and the paper was written collaboratively, make sure all the members of that group are present. If the paper was written in sections with one author per section, you can only go over those sections whose authors are present. We can’t teach someone who isn’t there; it borders on plagiarism.

Additionally, when you complete the paperwork for a group, staple the draft to just one of the feedback forms and write “draft attached to ______’s form” on the other feedback forms. When you put the forms/draft into the In Box, do not staple all of the documents together because each person counts as a session and Jodie and I do not always know to look for multiple feedback forms stapled together. Remember sessions potentially equal funding!!!!
Tutoring: What to do

These policies and procedures are designed to address some of the questions that may arise while you are at work. Of course, they are not all inclusive, so feel free to ask questions as needed. Our door is always open.

Schedule/Time off

- Design a schedule that will be consistent all semester. If you need to change, it isn’t as problematic with the electronic system, but you may already have appointments scheduled. Shifting appointments is not always as easy as it might seem.
- Set your schedule so that you can arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of your shift to allow time to settle in and be ready to begin.
- If you need to take a day(s) off, let Jodie or Gail know as soon as possible. We will be happy to block out your times and shift appointments if possible. Please do not just call or email that you are not coming in. While we realize that conflicts can occur at the last minute, if you are booked, you are responsible for those sessions.
- If you are going to be late, call so we can make adjustments or let the client know you are on your way.

Arriving at the UWC

- Put your belongings (purses, backpacks, etc.) in the kitchen or grad office. There are hangers in the kitchen. While we have only had a few problems with belongings walking off, it is better to be safe than sorry.
- Check your schedule (however, do not interrupt if someone is productively working on the main reception desk computer). Check the schedule periodically throughout your shift (especially if you are going to run to the computer lab or upstairs to get food); you may have additions and/or cancellations.
- If you have an appointment coming in, stick around so the receptionist does not have to come find you. However, do not block the traffic pattern around the desk. The clients have to sign in and the students/faculty moving in and out of the classroom will need space to walk without interrupting the sessions.

Being here

- If you are not in a session, you may work in the kitchen/break room, grad office, at one of the tables (if we are busy, try not to take up more than one table – your stuff on one and tutoring at another), on the computers in the back, or go to the computer lab. However, keep an eye on the clock so you can be ready for the clients when they arrive. The receptionists shouldn’t have to come find you each time.
- You may conduct your sessions in the front or back area, depending on where you and the client feel most comfortable. You may also use the conference room if it is available. If you are working with a group, the back tables or the conference room are probably more practical since those options are usually quieter and offer more space to spread out.
- If you leave during your scheduled time, make sure you let the receptionist know where we can find you if your client comes in and you aren’t back.
Beginning a Session – On the occasion that you have a client (and there will be many such occasions), greet them pleasantly, tell them your name, ask what they’re working on, and sit down with them. You may sit either at the front or back tables, or at the computers, whatever suits your needs and comfort level. After spending a couple of minutes getting to know the client and what they are working on, the first thing to do are always just basic administrative ones: ask the client to fill out the first parts of the Feedback Form (see examples of both the short and long forms) and if they’ve brought two copies of their draft. We ask clients to bring two copies so they will take their own notes on their copy and we can keep the copy with the tutor's comments. This promotes ownership of the revision and the session for the client and keeps session records for us. If they only brought one copy, explain our policy, write "no copy" on the feedback form, and then put your pencil down. It is now up to them to take notes. Finally, ask them if they have any materials relating to the assignment from their teacher (prompts, rubrics, texts, etc.). Try to first establish if they understand the assignment and then what their writing concerns are.

Assessing a Client’s Needs – It may be an oversimplification, but it is helpful to separate clients’ writing errors into two major categories:

- **higher-order concerns (or global errors)** – organization of ideas, thesis development, and whether one sentence logically follows the preceding sentence
- **lower-order concerns (or local errors)** – verb tense, comma use, and spelling errors.

Higher-order concerns should be addressed first, if for no other reason than because it might not do a client any good to change a comma if they need to eliminate the whole sentence.

Sometimes, what a client tells you they need help with differs from what you believe to be the main writing issue. They might believe that they just need help knowing when to use pronouns, but you notice that they have no clear thesis and that the paper is all over the place. Similarly, some clients have more issues than you think you can conceivably cover in the allotted time. In both of these cases, kindly and honestly explain to the client what you believe are the issues and do the best you can.

- In the first scenario, tell the client that while their pronoun use is something you will want to work on if you can, for this particular paper you are more worried about the lack of a thesis, and it might be in their best interest to start there. Remember: you can always ask them to come in for another session if they are that worried about pronouns.
- In the second scenario, tackle higher order concerns first, then errors that are the most recurring. If, after you’ve discussed a solid organizational scheme for the paper, you notice that the author just doesn’t know how to use it’s vs. its, then find a number of those examples in the paper and teach the client the correct way. Then have them identify the error and self-correct. Encourage them to make another appointment and explain clearly what you are seeing. Make sure that they know about their specific writing issues—perhaps, you tell them that next time you want to definitely work on agreement and transition usage. If for some reason they don’t get to work with you, then they still have something concrete to tell the tutor they do work with.

Reading Aloud – From a practical standpoint, you cannot assess a client’s needs without reading a sample of his/her work. There are different ways to do this, and every tutor has a different strategy. However, at some point in the session (unless you are just brainstorming), you will want to do some reading aloud. Why? Because this is the best method to help clients self-identify lower-order concerns. Ask if they would like to read or if they would like you to read; either way, it is often easier
to “hear” a goofy sentence than to see it. When they stumble over one, you can address it with them at that point.

Sometimes, especially when a client says s/he is having trouble knowing if the paper flows or where to put paragraphs, you might want to scan it quickly before you do any reading aloud (this can be done while the client is filling out the paperwork). That way you can assess if, indeed, higher-order concerns should be addressed first. For instance, if you discover that your client’s paragraphs are lacking any sort of rhyme or reason, you may want him/her to gloss each paragraph individually, coming up with a one or two word summary of each. Then, help him/her retroactively construct an outline and fit each paragraph where it logically should go. Finally, after reordering the paragraphs, you might want to start reading aloud.

Remember though, whatever you do and whatever you talk about, the client MUST take his/her own notes!

Ultimately, the best way to assess a client’s needs is to a) understand what the teacher wants of them, b) hear what their own writing concerns are, and c) read the paper and draw conclusions based on your professional judgment.

Goal Setting – Be honest with yourself and the clients about what you can do in the allotted time. If they have signed up for a 25 minute session and brought eight pages, tell them (kindly) that you will more than likely not get through that amount of text, that even in the best case scenario, most 25 minute sessions only get through 3-4 pages, and give them the opportunity to make an additional appointment. Another thing that will help them (either at home or in future sessions) is if you can identify specifically their common errors and explain them — even if these end up being things you do not have time to address. Remember: We are not miracle workers. We cannot turn a D paper into an A paper, nor should we! All we can do is try to teach our clients something that they can hopefully use — and eventually, over the course of time, they will have enough knowledge and confidence about writing to compose those A papers from the get go. WE DON’T “FIX” PAPERS, WE MAKE BETTER WRITERS — based on Stephen North’s (1984) concept.

Tutoring Skills — After assessing your clients’ needs and setting goals with them, the only thing left to do is tutor! Tutoring is actually more fun than most kinds of work and comes naturally to most people. All it really takes on your part is the ability to talk about writing and the writing process (which you all have), the ability to assess a client’s writing needs (which comes with practice), and

• The Ability to Listen — Listening is crucial. The Writing Center is a service that is offered for the clients to help them accomplish their goals. To this end, we want the clients to guide their own sessions by telling us what their concerns are. In some cases, they know their issues already, and we need to use listening as our primary assessment tool. Also, in most cases, they know the subject they are writing about better than we do, and we have to listen to them and defer to their knowledge about the field.

• The Habit of Modeling — Modeling is using your writing as an example of good scholastic behavior. Not a single one of us has ALL of the answers; when you get stumped by a question from your client, look at it as an opportunity to model good client behavior: ask a peer or boss, use reference books, look something up on the internet. If you admit that you don’t know what a word means (or how to spell it) and pull out a dictionary, your clients are all the more likely to pull out their dictionary next time they get stuck on a word.

• Be Tactful, but Honest — Clients need to know honestly what their writing issues are. Too many are never told in clear language just where their troubles lie. You will often hear the generic “grammar” as a client’s answer to the question about his/her writing concerns, and then discover that it’s not “grammar” per se, but that s/he keeps switching tenses. You want to tell him/her this, but you need to use tact. It does no one any good to be scared
away by rude, insensitive consultants! To the client above, say: “You know, I’ve noticed a couple of things about your paper that are grammar-related, but really the biggest thing I see and what I’d like to spend the most time on is that the verb tense shifts from present to past and back to present. Here’re some examples of what I mean.” Don’t be cruel, don’t pick on the client (either his writing or his person), don’t “grade” him/her (it’s not your place as a peer), and don’t say things that aren’t constructive. Instead, be tactful, compassionate, empathetic, but honest about the issues you see.

• **Pick Your Battles** – There is absolutely no need or reason to argue with a client. Nothing we do is worth raising voices over. If s/he absolutely refuses to hear what you are saying about an issue that you think is important (repetition, for instance), simply move on to something else. Ultimately, this is his/her paper, and if you’ve presented your concerns tactfully and honestly, it is his/her choice whether or not to follow your advice. If it is not just a certain piece of advice s/he is not interested in and the client strikes you as being overly-resistant and not interested in being in session in the first place, please see the section on resistant clients.

**Keeping Track of Time** – This is very important, especially during the “busy seasons” of midterms and finals. If a client is signed up for 30-minutes, end the session at the 25 minute mark to give both of you time for paperwork. Similarly if a client is signed up for an hour or 90 minutes, end ten minutes early (at the 50 or 80 minute mark). That leaves time to fill out the paperwork, make any copies you need to, put reference materials away, etc. It’s our instinct to want to help a client as much as we can, right up until the last second, but if you get behind, you may cheat another client out of a full session in the process. If you are working a 4 hour shift and you have 8 clients, each with thirty minute appointments, you can see how every minute is going to be valuable to each of them. This is also a good reason not to be late.

**Ending a Session** – Before it is time to end the session, tell the client you are going to have to wrap it up and ask if s/he has any more questions. You may want to also briefly list the issues you discussed in session and see if s/he is comfortable with what has been learned. You both need to fill out the rest of the feedback form and you may need to copy and stamp it as proof of the visit. Ask if the client is interested in making another appointment (or suggest it, if you think it is warranted) and walk him/her to the appointment desk. Wish him/her luck and put the feedback form (with your copy of their paper stapled to the top of it) in the In Box.

**To Stamp or Not To Stamp** – Make sure you ask if the client needs a copy of the paperwork for his/her teacher. Often, clients are required to come by their teacher, who may want proof. If this is the case, make a copy of the Feedback Form, stamp the COPY (not the original) with the stamp located on the front desk, fill in the color of the stamp and the date in pen, put your initials after the date, and give it to the client. Then staple the original to your copy of their work and place it in the In Box.

**Dealing with a Scary Subject You Are Unfamiliar With** – The first (or second or twenty-fifth) time you work with a graduate student, a paper on biophysics, a report on APA, or a discussion of 17th century philosophy, you may feel overwhelmed, lost, maybe even a little bit “stupid.” But rest assured we have all felt that way about some session we’ve worked on. Remember, we hired you because you are bright, intelligent, witty, and charming. You can do this. You are a prepared reader/interpreter.

Don’t be afraid to ask questions of the client. Don’t be afraid to tell him/her you know nothing about biophysics or 17th century philosophy – ask for some background. If you are lost, just ask questions
and help the client clarify the explanations. Generally the client will be very happy to discuss the project. Encouraging clients to articulate their ideas helps them think through what they are saying and how they are, or perhaps should be, saying it. And, frankly, you do not need a firm grasp of economics to help a client work on his/her project. His/her grasp of language in the document should help you understand the topic. We all have a comfort level—but don’t be afraid to reach beyond it.

**Not Doing a Session** — The only legitimate reason for not doing a session is if the client brings in a draft for a class you are also taking. In this instance, let a member of senior staff know right away so the session can be switched to another consultant.

If you are uncomfortable working on a paper of a particular topic, talk to Gail or Jodie. While we will do our best to accommodate you, this may not always be possible. Remember, your job is to act as a prepared reader/responder, and as such, you are providing feedback that may help the client understand that not every audience will agree with his/her position. See the “Grin and Bear It” article, located in the articles section of your binder, for tips on how to do this.

**Exams** — Unless we have explicit permission from the instructor or department, if a client comes in with an exam, we may not talk about content or idea development and support, citations, etc. You cannot even tell the client whether the ideas make sense or are well organized. You may only discuss grammar and mechanics and identify general problems with citation style. If there are exceptions for some classes, Jodie or Gail will notify you.
Feedback forms

NOTE: The feedback forms are necessary for our recordkeeping purposes (for our annual database and ultimately our funding reports), so it is very important to complete all of the information correctly. If Jodie and/or Gail have to take the time to find the information, it needlessly extends the data entry process. Additionally, if the client needs a copy for proof of the visit, it is important that the information accurately reflects the session.
Tutoring process
by Ilidiko Carrington

- Have the client sum up what s/he wants to accomplish in the draft and how s/he has
developed it. You will often find the client has more specific concerns and questions than
those indicated on the feedback form. It is a good idea to prompt the client to discuss what
s/he feels the draft’s strongest points are. If the client says “everything needs help!” try to
get him/her to narrow down his/her biggest concerns.

- Ask the client to read the draft or parts of the draft aloud. While reading, the client should
recognize how to take ownership of his/her own draft. Often the client will find and correct
editing problems independently so you do not have to point them out. Then you can spend
more time on higher-order concerns, such as development, organization, revision of
confusing passages, and audience awareness. We ask clients to read aloud so they can begin
to recognize and catch the types of errors being made. Generally, when we read silently on
a computer screen or a hard copy, we miss a lot of mistakes.

- As the client reads, take short notes on your copy of the draft (if you have one). You may
decide to stop at the end of each paragraph, each page, or you may have the client read the
entire draft depending on its length and the length of the session. Your notes will help you
focus on the client’s concerns (e.g., “You were worried about organization. I noted that I
could follow your main idea for the first three paragraphs, but I became confused in the
fourth paragraph and got lost in the fifth. Maybe we should return there and see what is
happening.”).

- Try to prompt the client to talk about the concerns you see in the draft rather than pointing
out directly what you think needs work. Asking questions helps the client become involved
in critical reading and thinking – e.g.
  - What was your intended purpose?
  - Why did you choose that quotation?
  - How do you think someone might disagree with your point here?
  - Which of your sources might help you to support this idea?
  - How could you further develop this idea?
  - Where in the draft might it be more effective to ask these questions?
  - Who might benefit from reading this paper when it is finished?
  - How else could you say this?
  - What connections could you make between paragraphs? sections?
  - What might be a more effective word choice? tone?

- Always encourage the client to write notes, outlines, ideas, etc. The client should leave the
conference with something s/he can refer to later. However, if the client is not writing
anything, stop writing and put down your pencil. DO NOT UNDER ANY
CIRCUMSTANCES MAKE A COPY OF THE UWC DRAFT FOR THE CLIENT
OR GIVE YOUR NOTES TO THE CLIENT! THEY ARE THE PROPERTY
OF THE UWC (CONSIDERED WORK PRODUCT) AND ARE USED TO MONITOR
HOW WELL WE DO OUR JOBS.

- If you do not know the answer to a client’s question, ask another consultant or check the
UWC resources. We have all been stumped – and the best way to figure something out is to
ask! No one expects you to know all of the answers – and sometimes, if you talk over a
drafting problem with the client, you can figure it out together. Asking questions models
writing as a collaborative process. Remember it is better to seek out an answer than give a wrong one!

- It is important to help a client talk about what s/he knows or has read when creating the document, especially if the draft deals with a subject area or discipline you are not familiar with. In explaining the ideas/concepts to you, the client may think about how to develop and/or improve the document.

Comment [113]: Condensed and placed elsewhere in 2009 revision: 1. delete unnecessary sections. 2. Move to General Tips section.
Tips for a successful session

by Megan Worth

A wide variety of students and even faculty within the numerous disciplines come into the UWC on daily basis. Our diversity of clients essentially works to ensure that you never quite know what to expect. This can be especially nerve-wracking. So here are a few tips for helping your sessions run more smoothly:

- Try to establish a friendly rapport with your client at beginning of the session. First time clients are often nervous because they don’t know what to expect. It is important to put them at ease. Even when someone has been here countless times before, establishing this rapport will go a long way.
- Collaborative interaction is key in the UWC. Reading aloud helps this type of interaction greatly go a long way towards involving both of you. Engage your client as much as possible – after all, it is their draft! Prompt them when you see good opportunities. Ask your client: “How would you reword this sentence? How can you reword this idea to make it clearer?” Above all, do not sit there and do all of the work for them. You are not here to fix their papers – you are here to help them improve their writing.
- Do not let your client make you feel like you cannot help them. You wouldn’t be working here if you weren’t capable! Additionally, do not be afraid to consult other resources: another consultant, handout, book, etc. Your client will appreciate that you are making the extra effort to answer their question. It does not reflect badly on your skills as a consultant at all.
- Prepare yourself for the possibility that your clients think they can keep the copy you are writing on. Head off a potentially disgruntled client by explaining our policy at the start of the session — and do not be surprised if you have to repeat yourself sometimes. Be firm. Clients will often engage in the session more if they know from the start that they will only have their copy and notes to use later.
- If your client wants to focus on something in particular, but you notice another more glaring concern, tell him/her. If s/he wants to work on grammar, but the organization of the paper leaves you lost, it is often beneficial to shift direction. Make sure that the big picture is in order before narrowing the scope (sometimes, this may mean recommending the client come for another session).
- Do not hesitate to model a change for your client, but do not help him/her with the changes verbatim. Phrasing that works well could be: “You could say something along the lines of…” Clients will often catch on when you model a change and will apply it beyond that one particular circumstance. If the clients try to be sneaky and have you repeat your suggestions so they can write it down word-for-word, engage them in their own modifications instead of simply giving in.
- As the session time starts to run out, keep an eye on the clock (try sitting where you can directly see it). It is often helpful to tell your client that you have ___ minutes left. Sometimes they have something in particular they will want to look at before the session ends. It also alerts them to the session’s impending end and erases the surprise of “Time’s up!” and the begging to just finish one more paragraph.
- It is not likely to happen often, but from time to time, clients are difficult and it may get to the point the session comes to a standstill. Difficult clients have, sometimes, even asked if they can work with someone else. If this happens, do not panic. Go find Gail or Jodic and see what you can or should do.
Helping clients become better writers

Talk about Clients' Specific Concerns – While many of our clients are unsure of what their writing issues are, many of them DO know and may have been having these same problems for years without ever being taught how to correct them. If a client, even casually, says that s/he has never understood how to use a comma or always confused their/there/they're, this is an opportunity for learning. If a client comes in and says “I don’t know how to write a thesis statement without using ‘I,’” this is an opportunity for learning. Sometimes it’s as simple as not knowing the difference between the plural and possessive; sometimes it’s as big as not understanding what an argument consists of, but if we don’t ask or don’t listen, we’ll never know. Anytime clients express a concern over a specific area, we can help them improve in that area, we can give them more confidence in their writing, and we can help them to become better writers.

Encourage Continued Learning Outside the Center – Along the same lines, if clients have trouble with run-on sentences, encourage them not only to come back to the center to work on their run-ons but also to do some of that work on their own. To this end we have a number of helpful handouts in your binder. Every once in a while, you get a client so excited s/he has finally figured out a concept that s/he does go home and work on it more. Additionally, handouts work well for people who like condensed forms of reference. A handout on run-ons might be consulted over a grammar book that might be thick and intimidating. Our handouts on transitions and citations also act as this type of reference and encourage good scholastic behavior. The clients can look up what they need to know without having to do it in a book that might be confusing to them.

Repeat Tutees: Ask Them to Demonstrate Previously Learned Skills – One of the true joys of tutoring is working with repeat clients: people who come to you week after week. It is in these clients that you can see progress and can witness better writing over time. One of the best ways you can help them in the context of the session is to casually ask them to demonstrate skills that they’ve learned in other sessions. You can say things like: “Remember when we talked about comma splices? I see two in this paragraph.” Reinforcing previously learned concepts and having them demonstrate their new skills gives them practice so they eventually become habitual. Internalizing writing rules makes better writers.
Non-standard sessions

Walk-Ins – If you are the scheduled Walk-In consultant, treat it as you would any other 25-minute session. However, be especially conscious of time, as usually when there is one walk-in, there are many. Please do not go over time, even if no one is waiting. If your client needs more assistance, help him/her to make another appointment, and be sure to provide a copy of our brochure with our phone number on it.

Online – Online sessions are an entirely different breed of cat (see the following page for the online tutor’s cheat sheet). The fact that the tutee is not sitting right in front of you can make it both easier and more difficult. You may be able to just whip through and explain the concepts they need to learn and throw some examples at them, but you’ll never know if they understand those concepts or if what you told them made sense to them. Essentially, online submissions are just client papers like any others, but there are just a couple things to keep in mind while commenting on them.

1. You shouldn’t really spend more than 20 minutes reading and assessing an online submission. Online submissions are only supposed to be 2 pages, if you receive one that is too long, step when you get to that point and explain that you did so. Encourage them to come to the center.
2. Try to identify between one and three things to discuss: either major problems or frequent small ones. Just like a regular session, start with higher-order concerns and progress to lower-order ones. Give examples.
3. Be tactful in your discussion. It is easy to misunderstand someone’s tone over email, so when responding, remember that the client might not get a joke or sarcasm. Be honest but tactful.

Finally, you need to have either Gail or Jodie log you onto the email to send your response.
Online tutoring tips
by Ellen Thornton

We know that online sessions can sometimes be a bit of a challenge. After all, it's hard to know exactly how to respond to someone who isn't there to discuss his/her writing! The tips offered below were brainstormed by your co-workers and have proven to withstand the angst of tutoring online.

To make the process easier:

1) Limit your reading time to 20 minutes and read quickly.
2) As you read, make notes for yourself on the draft. You won't have time to go back and re-read. When you get to 20 minutes, stop—no matter how much (or little) you get through.
3) Take 10 minutes to compose a response in a word document. Ask Jodie or Gail to log you on to the UWC account and paste your message into the email and send it off.
4) We don't need to review what you work—we trust you and the advice you give.

To make composing responses easier:

a) Choose 1 or 2 higher order concerns (lack of thesis statement, poor organization, plagiarism, etc.) and focus on those in your comments.
b) Feel free to provide a link to the OWL or a similar online source the student might find helpful. E.g.: I noticed you have several mistakes concerning APA in text citations. If you visit http://www.niu.edu and click on handouts, you'll find a helpful APA explanation.
c) Model a change for a student (i.e. In paragraph 2, the sentence that begins “According to recent research on guinea pigs, the average life span is 7.6 years”—you lack a comma after the introductory phrase—“According to recent research on guinea pigs, the...” Keep an eye out for places where you need this type of comma). If you model a change once or twice, you are not helping the student plagiarize. You are offering suggestions for (in this instance) comma usage.
d) If you think the student would benefit from an in-person session, by all means suggest this in your response.
e) Even though we ask for an explanation of the assignment, we don’t always get one. In this case, do the best you can. Mention in your comments that lack of an assignment prompt makes your comments general in nature.
f) Don’t forget to sign your name at the end of your response.

Keep in mind that your responses during online sessions really will be much more general than you can provide in a face-to-face session. That said—make sure you do not do the following in your online sessions:

1) stress out about not getting to everything (you generally won’t and that’s okay)
2) edit
3) read longer than 20 minutes or spend longer than 10 minutes composing your response
4) freak out when you realize your online submission is 15 pages printed out. It states very clearly on our website that online submissions should not be longer than 35ish pages and that we’ll only spend 30 minutes per draft.

If you have any questions or concerns about responding to online submissions, please don’t hesitate to ask Jodie or Gail for help and/or advice!
Resistant Clients – Sadly, there will always be those clients who are resistant to tutoring for a variety of reasons: they feel they do not need help, they feel stupid or embarrassed, they resent being required to come, or they feel it’s a waste of their time. Generally, these sessions can be very frustrating experiences for consultants, but it is worth keeping in mind that the clients may not understand the process. Thankfully, sometimes we can identify these situations and still have a productive session.

Identifying Resistance: You will be able to easily spot the following resistant client traits:
- they do not take notes,
- they don’t speak or are argumentative,
- they talk excessively about things not related to the session or to writing in an attempt to distract the tutor, or
- they ask the tutor to do their work for them.
All of these behaviors are obviously contradictory to a productive session, but also to our mission as consultants. So what can we do about them?

Handling Resistant Clients: There are a couple of tricks you can try to draw out resistant clients.
- You can try talking of other subjects besides school for a bit and then try to casually bring them around to the subject of their paper.
- You can try a version of the silent treatment: ask the client a directed question and silently wait them out until they answer.
- You can be forward: tell them you feel like the session could be going better and ask them if there’s anything wrong.
- You can gently remind them that this is their paper and their grade on the line, and while you want to help, you can’t do that unless they participate.
- Finally, you can always offer to reschedule. Let them know that you understand that it’s hard to be productive some days. If you do reschedule, also let them know that their next appointment doesn’t have to be with you.

Ultimately, it is up to you to decide what technique you think will work best in a given situation, and it is your decision how best to use your personality, kindness, and/or sense of humor to help. If you do encounter a resistant client (and everyone does at some point), please talk to your mentor, Gail, or Jodie to get the experience off your chest.

NOTES:
1. If someone is openly hostile, verbally or physically harassing, or otherwise threatening you, be it client, peer, teacher in the smart classroom, please let Gail or Jodie know right away.
2. If the client tells you s/he is only interested in the getting the feedback form and does not actively participate in the session, write the following statement on the feedback form prior to copying/stamping the form: “The client was only interested in securing the feedback form and was not actively engaged in the tutoring process.”
3. Further tips for dealing with resistant clients can be found in the following articles “Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers” and “Telling Tutor Tales,” which are included in the article section of your binder.

Plagiarism – If you suspect a client has plagiarized (often you will notice a tone change and a change in the level of language in these cases), address the concept openly WITHOUT MAKING AN ACCUSATION. You can simply ask, “Are these your words and ideas are they based on some of your
Most clients don't intentionally use other people's work, or sometimes they simply don't understand the rules of citation. This is something we can definitely help them with – and it will help them all throughout their college career. Technically, the client has not committed plagiarism until the document is turned in for a grade; therefore, we cannot turn him/her into his/her instructor/professor. We can, however, help the client learn how to document accurately and explain (not threaten) the potential consequences for the first offense: minimally failure of the assignment and possibly failure of the course, with documentation submitted to the Judicial Affairs Office as part of the client's permanent record. If it is not the first offense, the client will probably be academically dismissed from NIU.

For future reference, the NIU ENGLISH DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM is a representative sample for the university in general.

NIU English Department's Statement on Plagiarism

Clients faced with the task of writing a paper are sometimes tempted to borrow facts, ideas, or phrases from other writers as an aid to their own expressions. While it is possible to do this in an acceptable manner, the beginning writer in particular should be aware of the dangers of straying into the area of plagiarism. PLAGIARISM, SIMPLY DEFINED, IS TAKING SOMEONE ELSE'S WORDS OR IDEAS AND REPRESENTING THEM AS BEING YOUR OWN. It is specifically prohibited by University regulations, which state:

Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any client to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Clients are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Clients are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Clients guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university. (Undergraduate Catalog, p. 47)

The essence of plagiarism is theft and misrepresentation. One who plagiarizes is attempting to get credit, in the form of a grade, for someone else's work: in effect, he or she is doing the same sort of thing as copying another person's answers on an exam. Thus guilt or innocence in plagiarism cases is not a matter of how much material was stolen or what the motives of the thief were. Any material which is taken from another writer and presented as if it were the client's own original work comes under the prohibition.

Specifically, the following are examples of plagiarism:

1. A paper or assignment actually written in whole or part by another.

2. A paper or assignment copied word-for-word or with only minor changes from a book, magazine, or other source.
3. A paper copied in part from one or more sources, without proper identification and acknowledgment of the sources;

4. A paper which is merely a paraphrase of one or more sources, using ideas and/or logic without credit, even though the actual words may be changed.

5. A paper which quotes, summarizes or paraphrases, or cuts and pastes words, phrases or images from an Internet source without identification and the address of the Web site.

Notice numbers 2, 4, and 5. Direct quotation is not the only kind of plagiarism. Taking someone else’s ideas, judgments or logic, even if you put them in your own words, is as unacceptable as stealing the words.

This does not mean that outside sources may never be used. Some subjects and some assignments require research and the quotation of other writers’ work. But all such use of outside materials must be properly identified, through quotation marks, internal citations, endnotes, and/or other accepted ways of acknowledging such borrowings. It is not the use of an outside source that is wrong; it is the implicit claim that any material obtained in that manner is in fact original.

Nor does this mean that every single fact that you learn from some outside source must be documented. Material which is general knowledge or generally available from many sources (such as dictionary definitions, familiar historical facts, and the like) need not be identified; a reader assumes that you got the information somewhere. In most courses, facts drawn from the textbook in that course (but not the author’s judgments or conclusions) are fair game. But it is always better to err in the direction of over-acknowledgment; when in doubt, identify your source. Better yet, unless the assignment requires research, rely on your own knowledge, ideas and words;
Interpersonal relations in the UWC

Clients and You – The consultant/client relationship is a unique one. You are their peers, not teachers, but still you are imparting knowledge to them, and at times that can feel strange – especially to clients who are required to come here. You can alleviate this awkwardness basically by being yourself – open and friendly – but at the same time, professional. You do not have to reveal any personal information about yourself other than your name. If you’d like to use yourself as an example, however, to illustrate a writing concept, and if it is appropriate, that is your prerogative. Similarly, while you want to listen to your clients’ needs, and sometimes it is helpful for them to get some things off their chest, you are free to guide the conversation to the task at hand (writing) at any time. Sometimes conversations that are not about writing can help break the ice, loosen clients up, or help them refocus their ideas, but at the same time it is important to remember why you are both there. There is information in this binder on what to do if a client is resistant to tutoring. If a client tries to discuss inappropriate things with you, threatens you, or makes you uncomfortable, see Gail or Jodie right away. You will be asked to document the experience – minimally for UWC records and perhaps for the Judicial Affairs office.

Teachers and You – There is an invisible third person present at every session, the client’s teacher. It is s/he who gave the assignment and s/he who will be judging the work. Often, we are required to interpret the teacher’s assignment, meaning, handwriting, etc. for the client. Remember NOT TO CRITICIZE the teachers, their comments, or an assignment. That limits their credibility in the eyes of the client and will, in turn, lessen the effort that client will put into assignments. Do your best to help the client fulfill the assignment based on your own knowledge of what has been assigned. If the client is confused by a concept or forgot to write down something the teacher said, encourage him/her to check the Blackboard or WebBoard, to email the instructor, or to drop by during office hours. Again, helping clients become successful in college includes encouraging good scholarly behavior, and developing relationships with their professors is one very good way of doing that.

Fellow Consultants – As was mentioned at the very beginning, you all have some special qualities in common with each other or you would not be here – a love of writing, the desire to help others, the understanding and compassion it takes to do so, and a comprehension of how important writing is to success in college. Because of those similarities, we hope that you will all be able to get along and that some of you may develop life-long friendships, but all we ask is that you be courteous, respectful and kind to your fellow consultants. If there are any disagreements among you, please see Gail or Jodie to discuss it.

Gail and Jodie – Please feel free to come to us with any questions at any time – even if we are in a session. We are nice. We care. And chances are at least one of us has been there.
Workplace morale
by Megan Worth

Lessons from *Fish!*

"There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself."

Workplace morale is a tricky thing—it frequently ebbs and flows. Even the UWC is not immune to this. However, in our jobs as consultants, we need to do all that we can to keep morale high. Attitudes are infectious, and if we seem less than thrilled to be here, our clients may begin to see them the exact same way. A potential morale *buster* at the UWC is feeling ineffective. Perhaps you’ve had several lackluster sessions in a row that leave you feeling like nothing more than a “tutor-bot.” Maybe you’re going through a period in which you feel shaky about your abilities. Either way, with low morale, you have the very real potential to be a less effective consultant.

It is difficult to maintain enthusiasm sometimes, especially if it has been a long day and you are starting to feel burned out on session after session. It is easy to feel this way; however, as noted in *Fish!*, it is extremely important that you remain present and fully engaged in your work. Do not become a consultant who is only half there during a session. Your client is likely to notice, and even if she does not, you will know the difference.

"Create energy and goodwill."

One great thing about the UWC is the atmosphere. This is a huge morale *booster* because a place with life in it is, by far, a more enjoyable place to work. It is hard to beat a work environment where you are among friends. When you like coming to work, it reflects in all facets during your shift. Time will pass quickly, and you will value what you are doing more. You can be serious at work and still have fun at work. When you balance the two, your morale is likely to stay steady and high.

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Mentoring and being mentored

Each new tutor will be assigned a mentor, an experienced tutor. This person will be the one you can ask questions, vent to, and/or tap for resources throughout the semester. In reality, we are ALL available for such things and you should never hesitate to ask us, but if you would like a go-to person who is familiar with your strengths and weaknesses as a tutor, then your mentor will be there. Initially, the new consultant will watch sessions performed by the mentor and other UWC consultants, and then s/he will be observed conducting a session. After training and discussing the session with the mentor, the new person shall be "loosed upon the public at large." 

New consultants will meet with their mentors on a weekly basis the first semester and will write a status report. You and your mentor can go through the following mentorship agreement together.
Meetings

We will have meetings this semester covering various topics relating to the tutoring of writing. Consultants are required to attend. These meetings will also serve as a forum for discussing problems we’ve encountered in our sessions—how to draw out that quiet client, identifying the most effective brainstorming technique for your client, what to do when you feel rushed, etc. Because of differing schedules, we will hold each of the meetings twice—one on Tuesday at and again on Wednesday at.

You may decide which day you’d like to attend, but you must attend. The tentative schedule for meeting topics is as follows:

Meeting 1: Fact
Meeting 2: Punctuation
Meeting 3: Brainstorming
Meeting 4: Documentation
Meeting 5: Paper Types
Meeting 6: Online Sessions
Meeting 7: ELL
Meeting 8: Revision

[Comment [123]: Deleted in 2009 revision and inaccurate; delete.]
Tutor development
by: Megan Worth

While working in the UWC, new consultants may discover something—tutoring helps the consultant develop as a writer as well. We spend countless hours each semester tackling a large variety of papers. We often encounter things that we never would have thought about otherwise and discover new methods of writing, researching, etc. A great deal of this development comes from the collaborative nature of our sessions. We may be tutoring our clients, but whether we realize it or not, we often learn something from them. Maybe you will find a new way to organize your ideas or perhaps you will see a new method for revision. According to a writing consultant at the University of Missouri-Columbia:

The variety of writing processes and thinking processes that peer writing tutors see offers a chance to reconsider our own methods as students… Undergraduate tutors and writing centers have a mutually beneficial relationship: writing centers offer peer tutors a variety of experiences that can aid their development as students, and undergraduate tutors bring a useful dynamic to the writing center from their experiences in the classroom.¹

A writing consultant from Duke University noted, “I am certainly more consciously aware of things like organization, paragraph structure, and reader-centered prose. Things that were once mostly intuitive for me I can now think about more objectively as I revise, imagining my reader instead of focusing only on what I want to say.”²

Being a UWC consultant places you in a unique position—you can, quite literally, see things from both sides of the table. Take advantage of it!

Employee performance documents

Self-evaluation
At the beginning and at the end of the semester we will provide self-evaluation forms that will ask you to evaluate yourself as a writing consultant. The initial reflection is to identify any areas you think you would like to work on throughout the semester. The final reflection, obviously, is your assessment of your performance throughout the semester, including those ideas you wanted to investigate, improve, work on, etc. You should definitely all be able to confidently and honestly spout your virtues by the end of the semester (even if you are hesitant at the beginning of the semester) because if you HAVE had any problems, you will have discussed them with your peers, your mentor, or Jodie or Gail and figured out the best way to handle any concerns.

Observation/NIU work performance report
At some point during the course of the semester, you will be observed by Jodie, Gail, or a designated graduate assistant. This isn’t meant to be scary, threatening, or Big Brother-ish; it is simply the best way to accomplish three things:
• to see how effective our training is,
• to see if there are areas we need to discuss with you personally,
• to see if the level of tutoring is fairly consistent from tutor to tutor.

Policy violation
On the rare occasion that a UWC policy is violated by an employee, a formal written report will be drafted. After three written violations, the employee will be terminated.

NOTES:
1. See the next pages for copies of the employee performance documents
2. Copies of any and all documents will be given to the consultant as well as kept in his/her UWC personnel folder.
There are a number of special projects and services that the Writing Center offers for consultants interested in participating/leading. These include

- **WC Service Presentations** – In which the consultant goes to individual classrooms armed with knowledge and brochures to introduce the UWC to a whole new batch of clients. If you love the UWC and think you can confidently speak of its virtues in front of a large group, please see Gail or Jodie to volunteer.

- **WC Seminars/Topic Focused Presentations** – Periodically throughout the course of the semester we will be giving seminars about topics that are of frequent interest to our clients: how to write resumes/cover letters, how to write a statement of purpose, what belongs in a personal statement, what an APA paper should look like, and things of that nature. If you have special knowledge of these or any topic you think would be helpful for our clients and if you are interested in sharing that knowledge, please see Gail or Jodie.

- **Newsletter** – We will produce the *University Writing Center Compendium*, the UWC newsletter, twice a semester. You may be asked to contribute, individually or collaboratively, an article, drawing, etc. Melissa is our resident editor.

- **Handouts** – It is helpful to have a collection of handouts (hard copy and/or electronic) to share with the staff and the clients, so from time to time, you will be asked, or you could volunteer, to develop information that explains some facet of writing in a particular genre or disciplines or tips on how to navigate components of the writing process.

- **TAILS** – Some of the UWC staff has been making weekly trips to TAILS, the local humane shelter, to play with the animals and to write their adoption bios. You might be interested in joining the group. If so, see Jodie.
The front desk

We try to have a student receptionist at the front desk at all times, but sometimes it is impossible. That means whoever is free should sit there to help out by making appointments and answering the phone. The desk should not be unattended. If you are working at the desk and a client comes in for you, attempt to find someone free to cover the desk at that time. If all else fails, we do have voicemail.

Making Appointments and Adding Clients to the System—If you are working the Front Desk, the most frequent question you will be asked is “Are there any appointments available for such and such date?” This is a very easy thing to find out. Our calendar will be open on the front desk computer; if not, see the Customer Appointment icon on the desktop. It will show a breakdown of the current day and who is available (see image). If you need a different day, simply go to the calendar in the left-hand sidebar and click on that day (however, please remember to click back to the current day when you are finished).

To make an appointment for someone who is ALREADY IN THE SYSTEM: Right-click on the time they are interested in coming, click on “add appointment” from the pop-up menu, locate the client in the directory (type in the beginning of the first or last name if s/he has been there before and highlight the name) and make sure you insert the correct time (30, 60, or 90 minutes). NOTE: A 90 minute appointment requires permission from a senior staff person or the person conducting the session and is limited to graduate students and/or faculty. Finally, in the “notes” section, type what the client is working on and confirm the appointment (see screenshot of the appointment calendar).

If a client is NOT IN THE SYSTEM (ask to be sure—if they haven’t been in since June 16, 2008, then they aren’t in the system), click on the “add-client” button in the top left-hand corner of the spreadsheet screen (see image), then fill out the information requested by the pop-up. After you’ve added the client to the system, feel free to make the appointment for the time they’ve requested (if it is available). Confirm the appointment and make sure you remind him/her to bring two copies of whatever s/he is working on and whatever the teacher gave to aid in explaining the assignment.

To make a repeat appointment, click on

Answering the Phone—If the phone rings, answer it in the following manner “University Writing Center this is (insert your name), may I help you?” If the caller is seeking an appointment, follow the same procedures as above:

Taking Messages—If the caller is looking for Gail or Jodie and neither is available, just take a message and leave it in the mail pouch on the main office door. If you take a message for anyone else, put it in the appropriate mail pouch on the kitchen door.

Retrieving Messages—If the voicemail/message light is blinking, pick up the receiver, press the message button, and, when prompted, enter the mailbox code “56” and the password “1234566.” Then take the messages and disperse them as needed (to appropriate mail pouches) or return the call to schedule requested appointments.

Greeting Clients and Alerting Consultants—Although we do have student receptionists, it may be necessary for you to staff the front desk. Working the front desk makes you the first person clients see when they come in. Greet them, be nice, and ask if you can help them. If they need an
appointment, follow the method above; if they already have an appointment, ask them to sign in; give them a feedback form (the long form for new clients, the short form for repeat clients), and let their consultant know they've arrived.

**Filing**—Occasionally, you may be asked to file folders of client records. The drawers are on the wall between the Graduate Assistants' office and the kitchen, are in alphabetical order, and are marked with the letters contained therein. File the documents in the back of the folder, so they remain in chronological order within the folder.

**Walk-In Policy**—If you are working the desk and a walk-in time is on the schedule, determine how many slots are available. Since each walk-in slot can only be 25 minutes, a two-hour scheduled walk-in time will consist of four spots. When clients walk in, put their name on the sign-in board. The biggest rule for walk-ins is that those interested in a walk-in appointment cannot leave the center after they've been put on the list—otherwise it is not a walk-in anymore! Some clients will choose to wait long periods of time for a walk-in appointment; these clients can use the UWC computers (if any are available), crash in one of the chairs, or work at one of the tables in the back (if any are available), but again, they may not leave and come back!
Miscellany

General UWC information

- **Writing Center Hours** – The Writing Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday thru Thursday. We are closed on Fridays and during school holidays.

- **Phone Number** – Our main phone number is 815-753-6636. The office number is 815-753-4499. Our fax number is 815-753-4111.

- **Web Address** – Our web address is http://uwc.niu.edu/ and our MySpace and Facebook pages can be accessed from the website. Online submission information, directions to the UWC, contact information, and helpful handouts are also found there.

- **Where We Are Located and How to Get Here** – We’re located in Stevenson South, Tower B, Lower Level.

  - **Directions from I-88 with a parking pass** – Exit at Annie Glidden and go north to Lincoln Highway/Route 38. Turn left and pass by Dollar Video, Taco Bell and several apartment buildings. At the water tower, turn right onto Stadium Drive. The road curves to the right. Take the first left onto Stadium Drive West and drive north. Yellow, blue, and brown permit parking is allowed on the east side of the street. Blue and orange parking is allowed in the two lots. (Blue permits may park in orange spaces.) We are in Stevenson South – the series of white towers north of the baseball field/basketball courts.

  - **Directions from north with a parking pass** – Take Annie Glidden Road south to Lucinda. Turn right on Lucinda. At stop sign (a T-intersection), turn left and follow the road around the football field to Stadium Drive West. Turn left on Stadium Drive West. Yellow, blue, and brown permit parking is allowed on the east side of the street. Blue and orange parking is allowed in the two lots. (Blue permits may park in orange spaces.) We are in Stevenson South – the series of white towers north of the baseball field/basketball courts.

  - **Directions for those without parking permits** – Unless a client has a parking permit, parking can be somewhat of a challenge on this side of campus. Therefore, we suggest that, when possible, clients should park in the Visitor Lot (near the Library) and take either a Circle Left or Circle Right bus from the west side of the Student Center to get to Stevenson South.

- **Smart Classroom (SSWC) Rules** – No food or drink (including coffee and water) are allowed in the classroom. We appreciate your help in keeping an eye on this. Although there are signs posted everywhere about this rule, students and faculty still like to think it doesn’t include them. It does.

- **Computers** – If you look around, you’ll notice that we have quite a few computers in the UWC. These are for you to use with your clients, but you are (of course) free to use these as long as no client is waiting for one. We do ask, however, that if you are on the internet, please use common sense as far as the content of the websites you are visiting.

  Do not download materials to these computers, unless you are working with an emailed document. In this case, if you just save the document without designating a specific place for saving it, it will
save as a template and be extremely difficult to retrieve, even if you have revised or edited it. When you are opening an emailed document, save it to the desktop or to the student folder (if there is one on the desktop), work on the document, and then minimize it while resending it in an email. Once it is successfully sent, close the document and drag it to the trash.

- **Printers** – We do not have printers for client OR tutor use. There is a 24-hour computer lab on the other side of the stairs. To print in the computer lab, clients will need to have an NIU OneCard to swipe before retrieving the printed documents.

  **NOTE:** We do not have any control over the computer lab – including the printers. On rare occasions, we have gone over to help a client figure out a problem. But it is very rare.

- **Copiers** – We do not have a budget to make copies of consultants’ or clients’ papers or non-UWC documents. If you want to make copies of some of the handouts in this binder to give to the client or copy the feedback form for the client’s professor, then the copier in the main room is available for such purposes.

- **Telephones** – Because we have to start keeping better records of our long distance/off campus phone calls, we have instituted a phone log (next to the main computer on the reception desk). If you make or return a call that is either long distance or off campus, please fill in the Phone Log information. Please do not make personal long distance/off campus phone calls from the UWC phone.

- **No-Show and Late Tutees** – The UWC No-Show Policy: If a client misses three appointments, without calling to cancel, s/he may only use the walk-in services for the rest of the semester. If a client is more than five minutes late for a 25 minute session or 10 minutes late for a fifty minute session the appointment may be cancelled – especially if there are people waiting or we are very busy. These policies are posted in the center, but may need to be explained to clients from time to time.

- **Exams** – If a client comes in with a written exam, we cannot discuss ANYTHING but grammar/punctuation. Any discussion of content, theses, organization, etc. is not allowed—otherwise we are the ones taking the test. If there are exceptions, Gail or Jodie will let you know.

- **Paperwork** – Feedback forms (and the correct completion of them) are the consultants’ responsibility. If a client is new to the center (or has not been in since the beginning of summer school of the current academic year), s/he needs to fill out the long form; if s/he has been in during the academic year, s/he can fill out the short form. Before your client leaves, make sure that all of the information on the feedback form is filled in—teacher’s name, course information, etc. This helps us understand who is using the center and why – think funding and saving Jodie and/or Gail data entry time.

**Personnel Information**

- **Checking Your Schedule** – Finally, as mentioned at the very beginning of this information, it is your responsibility to know when your clients are scheduled and to be prepared for them, so check the schedule, and check it often.

- **Down Time** – Occasionally (especially near the beginning of the semester), there will be time when you are scheduled to work that you don’t have clients. In this event, ask if there is anything
that needs to be done; we may need help at the desk, with filing, in the kitchen, or in creating handouts, newsletter articles and/or seminars! If it is a really slow day, feel free to do your homework. In fact, consultants hard at work studying is a good scholastic behavior to model for our clients.

- **Calling In Sick/Emergencies/Coming Late** – We understand that everyone gets the sniffles, gets stuck in traffic, has family emergencies, and sometimes just spaces out. And while we try to be accommodating in these circumstances, please be aware that sometimes it simply isn’t possible. If you are sick or going to be late, by all means call and we will try to shuffle your clients to other consultants, but know that you are ultimately responsible for covering your shift if we can’t make enough adjustments.

- **Leaving work** – If you are a peer consultant or a student receptionist, make sure you write in your hours on the timesheet before you leave work every day. This will help immensely when it’s payroll time.
  
  If you used any dishes, etc. in the kitchen or brought them into another area, please clean up before you leave. You might also browse the appointment schedule to see what your next work day looks like.

- **Leaving early** – If you finish early, do not just leave without first asking if there is anything you can do (walk-ins, online sessions, filing, reception, etc.). Chances are good that we will let you leave early, but do not just disappear. Make sure your time card reflects the time you actually leave.

- **Mailboxes** – Your personalized mail pouches are located on the kitchen door, alphabetical by your last name. Please check them frequently as that is where you will find your payroll information and, of course, unbelievably important memos, notes, etc.

- **Payroll** – Pay periods are from the 1st of the month to the 15th and the 16th to the end of the month. Paydays are the 15th and the last working day of the month, or whatever working day is closest to the 15th and end of the month. (Good luck figuring that out)

- **Kitchen Stuff** – Feel free to use what you need to in the kitchen, but PLEASE clean up after yourself. That means doing your own dishes, wiping up spills on the counter or in the microwave, and turning off the oven and coffeemaker when you are finished using them. Do not let your food sit in the fridge until it becomes a science experiment. We’re a writing center not a chemistry lab!!! Also do not put food down the sink. The garbage disposal does not work, so the sink will back up (not a pretty sight and not worth the plumbers rolling their eyes at our inability to follow directions). On the plus side, the coffee and tea and miscellaneous foods on the shelves are for all to share, so help yourself!

- **Problems/Concerns/Gripes** – If at any point you have a problem of any kind, either with a co-worker or a client, you should contact Gail or Jodie immediately. Our door is always open (unless it is closed, in which case knock first please). We take your concerns seriously and want to do what we can do to ensure a positive, friendly, and professional workplace.
Frequently asked questions

1. **Where are you located?** We're in Stevenson South, Lower Level, toward Tower B. There are signs in Stevenson to help locate us.

2. **How much does it cost?** Nothing. It is free!

3. **Do I need to be an NIU student?** Students, faculty, and staff must be connected to NIU. If not, someone from the community inquiring, a member of the senior staff needs to take the call—sometimes we do make exceptions.

4. **Can you answer a quick question over the phone?** Simply state that we have a policy against tying up the phone line answering session-related questions. Try to get the caller to schedule an appointment or have him/her send the question via online submission or visit our MySpace or Facebook pages.

5. **Can I do a session over the phone?** No. Simply state that we have a policy against tying up the phone line answering session-related questions. Try to get the caller to schedule an appointment or have him/her send the document via online submission or visit our MySpace or Facebook pages.

6. **Is this the Writers' Workshop?** No. That is in DuSable and only for students enrolled in the CHANCE Program English classes. The number is 815-753-0272.

7. **Is there another writing center on campus?** No. We are the only general population writing center on campus. There is an ESL (English as a Second Language) lab in Reavis. The number is 815-753-6637.

8. **I don’t have a parking permit, so where can I park?** There is no permit-free parking near the UWC. We suggest parking in the Visitor Lot in central campus (by the Library) and taking Circle Left or Circle Right bus from the Student Center to Stevenson South.

9. **I have a parking permit, where can I park?** There is parking for yellow, blue, and brown on Stadium Drive next to the baseball field. Orange and blue can park in the lots west of Stevenson. There are some pay spots in front of the Recreation Center at the corner of Luwinda and Annie Glidden Road.

10. **How much is a parking fine?** The fine is $40.00 for a regular spot and $50.00 for an accessible spot.

11. **Which bus is the fastest?** If you are coming to the UWC from the Student Center or DuSable, take the Circle Left. If you are coming from Bardeen or east campus, take the Circle Right. Conversely, if you are leaving the UWC for DuSable, take Circle Right. If you are going to Bardeen, take Circle Left. Reverse the process when you leave.

12. **Can I drop off my paper and pick it up later? (also known as my professor said I could drop it off)** Clients must actively participate in the session, so they may not just drop off their
papers to be “fixed.” We are not a laundry service. Clients are expected to sit down with us as we help them identify their strengths and challenges and discuss strategies for improving their writing.

13. Can I get a really quick appointment, like only 5 or 10 minutes? Very rarely do we ever get a session that takes only 5 or 10 minutes. Students really do need to sign up; minimally, for a 25-minute session. If we finish early, we finish early. No one is forced to stay.

14. My paper is really short. I only need a 25-minute session. Again this is a red flag. Ask how long the paper is. We generally get through 3-4 pages in a 25-minute session. If the paper is longer, they should sign up for at least a 50-minute session and perhaps more than one appointment to ensure they can get through everything.

15. Do I really need an appointment? Yes. Maybe not so much at the beginning of the semester but certainly as the semester goes on and we are booked up. It is better to have one or two or three appointments scheduled that you can cancel than not have one at all.

16. If I'm here waiting for walk-ins, can I run to the computer lab or my room or the cafeteria or outside to smoke? No. The policy states that if you are waiting for a walk-in session, you have to wait in the UWC. We do have computers, study areas, comfortable chairs, and washrooms.

17. Can't I just take my coffee or water in the classroom? No. None of the computers are insured, so if they are damaged we are out of luck.

18. Hey, I'm a client, but I'm over in the computer lab and the computers/printer aren't working. Can you help? We don't have anything to do with the computer lab. That is ITS. The number is 753-8100.

19. I'm in class right now, but I have to reset my password. Can you help? We can't, but the student may use our phone to call the password reset number 753-8100.

20. Can I meet with a consultant when you're closed or outside the UWC? No. If you want to schedule an appointment with a UWC consultant, you need to come in during our regular weekly hours.

21. I only want to work with a graduate student or faculty member. When possible, we can try to accommodate a client's request to work with a graduate student, instructor, or member of the senior staff. However, that is not always possible. Assure the client that our peer consultants are smart, intelligent, friendly, and prepared. We would not have hired them if we didn't have faith in them.

22. Will you sign this sheet my professor gave me to prove I was here? No. However, we will provide a copy of the feedback form, which has all the relevant data from the visit. The form is dated and stamped, so the professor will know exactly when the client was in and what happened during the session.
23. I can’t get in, so can I just pick up a feedback form because my professor requires that we come in? No! No! No! Clients have to be here and actively participate in the sessions. Giving them a feedback form when they haven’t been in is cheating.

24. How long does a session take? It depends on the paper, the assignment, the client. We suggest, especially for first-time visitors, that clients make a 50-minute appointment. Then they can gauge how much time they think they’ll need for follow-up visits. Better to have too much time than not enough.

25. So I know you just told me the UWC is booked and I can’t get an appointment for three days, but can I just come in anyway and wait? No. Clients really do need to schedule appointments ahead of time. It’s chaos if we are so busy clients can’t get appointments for three days. Our consultants, if they have a random few minutes to spare, need to rest, relax, and regroup before their next session.

26. I know you’re all booked, but can you just take my number and call me if there’s a cancellation? Again, no. It would be too chaotic to try and keep track of who called when and for what. Clients need to realize they really should book ahead.

27. Can I bring in a paper for a friend? No. The writer must be present to go through the whole document or else it’s a form of plagiarism. The friend is taking down suggestions for the writer. If the writer then takes the suggestions, it’s taking the friend’s, or yours, ideas and passing them off as his/her own.

28. I am part of a group, but the other members can’t come. Is it okay if I just bring in the paper? No. All of the writers must be present or else it’s a form of plagiarism. We may go through only the sections written by those present. The group member is taking down suggestions for the writer. If the writer then takes the suggestions, it’s taking the group member’s, or yours, ideas and passing them off as his/her own. Additionally, do not buy into—we wrote it all together or I wrote it all for the group.

29. How do I submit via email/online? Visit our website at http://uwcniu.edu. Click online submissions and follow the directions. Online submissions have up to a 48-hour turn-around. If papers are submitted Friday after 12:00 or any time over the weekend, the 48-hour period begins on Monday morning.

Clients need to be aware that approximately 25 minutes are spent on each online submission; therefore, we do not encourage submission of long assignments. Furthermore, students enrolled in English 102, 103, 104, or 105 may not submit paper for these classes online.

30. I sent my paper via email, how do I get a feedback form? Just print out the response.

That will work the same as the form.
Handouts for clients

The handouts in this section of your manual will help you and your clients work through a variety of writing concerns. You will find information about higher and lower order concerns, documentation cheat sheets, explanations for punctuation, tips on how to write in some disciplines, etc.

The handouts in this section may be copied for clients.
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Welcome

Welcome to the University Writing Center (UWC)! It takes a certain type of person to want to be a writing tutor. You were selected for a number of reasons:

- because you have a passion for talking about language use and stylistic challenges in writing;
- you are compassionate and comfortable with all kinds of people and ability levels;
- you understand that it is impossible to be a successful college client student without at least a basic proficiency in writing, and
- you want to help the UWC clients attain that proficiency.

This final point is what the UWC is all about. Our job is help our clients become better writers through the tutoring process, which can be somewhat confusing or frustrating at times for the tutor, but it is also incredibly satisfying. The following Tutor Manual is designed to provide you with basic information about working at the UWC and tutoring in general as well as answer any questions you may have about our policies and procedures in hopes of making your transition a little smoother. Happy reading and remember: learn 'em good!

UWC Purpose & Goals

WHAT UWC WILL DO

What does this mean for the clients who use the Center? As our brochure states, we are available to help clients become more proficient at writing for any type of project: academic (i.e., any class or assignment), creative, and personal (e.g., resumes, application letters). Some specific things we as consultants can do to address clients’ needs are include:

- identifying clients’ writing strengths and weaknesses
- providing strategies for research/documentation
- modeling demonstrating strategies for prewriting
- helping organize thoughts or paragraphs
- explaining revision tactics
- teaching self-editing/self-proofreading
- demonstrating revision tactics
- illustrating the documenting of sources documentation using the proper format
- identifying clients’ writing strengths and weaknesses
- helping organizing and practice presentations with clients
- learn teaching computer (word processing) skills
- learn demonstrating research/documentation skills.
WHAT UWC WILL NOT DO

We do NOT proofread papers. Nor do we so-called “fix” them. Why not? Those actions will not help clients in the long run. To simply change a comma to a semi-colon for them will never teach them how to use commas and semi-colons. Additionally, “fixing” their papers minimizes the clients’ ability to claim sole authorship, which is akin to plagiarism. For more information, see the section on plagiarism. To ensure that clients’ work is always their own, we conduct client-guided sessions. Through dialogue (talking with each writer about his/her strengths and challenges), we actively engage writers in a process of learning writing-related skills to apply to a broad range of future endeavors rather than to just meet the needs of a particular assignment. We attempt to answer clients’ writing questions, sometimes often using their own work as an example, and encourage them to practice what they’ve learned. Our goal is to help clients become better writers, and to do so, we facilitate learning by making sessions client-focused, not just paper-focused. Remember: No client is going to leave the center with a perfect paper, but she or she should leave with a better, more-knowledge-understanding of writing.
Procedures

Before Sessions

**ARRIVING/CHECKING SCHEDULE**

- Put your belongings (e.g., purses, backpacks, etc.) in the kitchen or grad office. There are hangers in the kitchen. While we have only had a few problems with belongings walking off, it is better to be safe than sorry.

- Check your schedule when you first arrive and periodically throughout your shift (especially if you are going to run to the computer lab or go upstairs to get food) as you may have additions and/or cancellations. It is your responsibility to know when your appointments are and be prepared for them. However, please do not interrupt whoever is working reception to ask to see your schedule if he or she is working productively. (however, do not interrupt if someone is productively working on the main reception desk computer). Check the schedule periodically throughout your shift (especially if you are going to run to the computer lab or upstairs to get food); you may have additions and/or cancellations.

- If you have an appointment coming in, stick around so that the receptionist does not have to come find you. However, do not block the traffic pattern around the desk. The clients have to sign in, and the students/faculty moving in and out of the classroom will need space to walk without interrupting the sessions. Finally, as mentioned at the very beginning of this information, it is your responsibility to know when your clients are scheduled and to be prepared for them, so check the schedule, and check it often.

**DOWN TIME/BEING HERE**

- If you are not in a session, you may work in the kitchen/break room, in the grad office, at one of the tables (if we are busy, try not to take up more than one table—your stuff on one and tutoring at another), on the computers in the back, or go to in the computer lab next door.

- If you do leave our area, make sure you let the receptionist know where we can find you just in case your client comes in and you are not back yet. However, the receptionists should not have to come find you each time, so keep an eye on the clock so that you can be ready for your the clients when they arrive. The receptionists shouldn’t have to come find you each time.

- You may conduct your sessions in the front or back area, depending on where you and the client feel most comfortable. You may also use the conference room if it is available. If you are working with a group, the back tables or the conference room are probably more practical since those options are usually quieter and offer more space to spread out.

- If you leave during your scheduled time, make sure you let the receptionist know where we can find you if your client comes in and you aren’t back.
Occasionally, especially near the beginning of the semester, there will be times when you are scheduled to work that you don't have clients. In this event, ask if there is anything that needs to be done. Sometimes, we may need help with filing or in-creating handouts, newsletter articles, and/or seminars! If it is a really slow day, feel free to do your homework. In fact, consultants-tutors hard at work studying is a good scholastic behavior to model for our clients.

BEGINNING A SESSION

When you have a client, greet them pleasantly, tell them your name, and ask what they are working on. After spending a couple of minutes getting to know the client and determining what they are working on, the first things to do are always just basic administrative tasks:

- Ask the client to fill out the first parts of the Feedback Forms. (See examples of both the short and long forms in the Appendices.)
- Ask if they have brought two copies of their draft—we ask clients to bring two copies so that they will take their own notes on their respective copies and we can keep the copy with the tutor's comments. This promotes ownership of the revision and the session for the client and keeps session records for us.

  - If a client wants to work off a computer, they are required to bring at least one paper copy for the tutor to work on.
  - **Note**: Please see the section on plagiarism for more information.
- If they only brought one copy, explain our policy, write "no copy" on the feedback form, and then put your pencil down. It is now up to them to take notes.
- Finally, ask them if they have any materials related to the assignment. Try to first establish if they understand the assignment and then determine what their writing concerns are.

During Sessions

ASSESSING A CLIENT'S NEEDS

It may be an oversimplification, but it is helpful to separate clients' writing errors into two major categories:

- __higher-order concerns (or global errors)__
  - organization of ideas;
  - thesis development, and
  - argument logic
- __whether one sentence logically follows the preceding sentence__
- **proper citation**
• adherence to prompt instructions
• lower-order concerns (or local errors)
  • verb tense,
  • comma use, and
  • spelling errors.

NOTE: Higher-order concerns should be addressed first; if for no other reason than because it might not do a client any good to change a comma if s/he he or she needs to eliminate the whole sentence. Perhaps more importantly, however, a well thought out paper with a clear thesis will receive higher marks than a paper with perfect grammar that lacks organization or has faulty logic. We are doing the client a disservice if we merely proofread a paper when there are bigger issues. Appointments often go by quickly, so try to tackle global concerns first; a spell-checker will catch a fair amount of what proofreading is left.

Sometimes, what a client tells you s/he he or she needs help with differs from what you believe to be the main writing issue. S/he he or she might believe that s/he he or she just needs help knowing when to use pronouns, but you may notice that s/he he or she has no clear thesis and that the paper is all over the place. Similarly, some clients have more issues than you think you can conceivably cover in the allotted time. In both of these cases, kindly and honestly explain to the client what you believe are the issues and do the best you can.

• In this case, first scenario, tell the client that while his/her his or her pronoun use is something you will want to work on if you can, for this particular paper, you are more worried about the lack of a thesis, and it might be in his/her his or her best interest to start there.

Similarly, some clients have more issues than you think you can conceivably cover in the allotted time.

• In the second scenario, tackle higher order concerns first, then errors that are the most recurring. If, after you’ve discussed a solid organizational scheme for the paper, you notice that the author just doesn’t know how to use it’s vs. its, then find a number of those examples in the paper and teach the client the correct usage way. Then, have him or her try to identify the error on his or her own and self-correct. Encourage him/her to make another appointment and at the end of the appointment, explain clearly what errors you are seeing in the paper, and encourage him or her to make another appointment.

Make sure that s/he he or she knows about his/her his or her specific writing issues—for instance, you tell him/her him or her that next time you want to definitely work on subject-verb agreement and transition usage. Then, if for some reason s/he he or she doesn’t get to work with you, then s/he he or she still has something concrete to tell the tutor s/he he or she does work with.
READING ALOUD

From a practical standpoint, you cannot assess a client's needs without reading a sample of his/her work. There are different ways to do this, and every tutor has a different strategy: some tutors prefer to have the client read, while others opt to read themselves; and some tutors correct errors sentence by sentence, while others read the entire paragraph before making any suggestions.

However, at some point in the session (unless you are just brainstorming), you will want to do some reading aloud. Why? Reading aloud prevents the tutoring process from devolving into editing; when the tutor reads silently, it is easier to make corrections without the client's participation, which is not in keeping with the collaborative nature of teaching. Additionally, it is often easier to hear a goofy sentence than to see it. Because this is the best method to help clients self-identify higher- and lower order concerns, ask if they would like to read or if they would like you to read; either way, it is often easier to "hear" a goofy sentence than to see it. When they stumble over one, you can address it at that point.

Sometimes, especially when a client says s/he is having trouble knowing if the paper flows or where to put paragraphs, you might want to scan it quickly before you do any reading aloud (this can be done while the client is filling out the paperwork), especially when a client says he or she is having trouble telling if the paper flows or figuring out where to put paragraphs. Scanning first can help you that way you can assess if, indeed, higher-order concerns should be addressed first. You may want him or her to gloss each paragraph individually, coming up with a one or two word summary of each. Then, help him/her retroactively construct an outline (i.e., make a reverse outline) and fit each paragraph where it logically should go. Finally, after reordering the paragraphs, you might want to start reading aloud.

NOTE: Remember though, whatever you do and whatever you talk about, the client MUST take his/her own notes!

Ultimately, the best way to assess a client's needs is to a) understand figure out what the teacher wants expects of them, b) listen hear what their own writing concerns are, and c) read the paper aloud and draw conclusions based on your professional judgment.

GOAL SETTING

Be honest with yourself and the clients about what you can do in the allotted time. If they-he or she have has signed up for a 25 minute session and brought eight pages, tell them (kindly) that you will more than likely not get through that amount of text because—that even in the best case scenario, most times a tutor can only get through 3-4 pages in a 25 minute sessions only get through 3-4 pages. Give them the opportunity to make an additional appointment.
NOTE: Remember too: We are not miracle workers. We cannot turn a D paper into an A paper, nor should we! All we can do is try to teach our clients something that they can hopefully use for this assignment—and eventually, over the course of time, they hopefully will have enough knowledge and confidence to begin about writing to compose those A papers from the get go. We DON'T "FIX" PAPERS, WE MAKE BETTER WRITERS—based on Stephen North's (1984) concept.

**Keeping Track of Time**

This time management is very important, especially during the "busies seasons" of midterms and finals, the busiest times of the year for us. If a client is signed up for 30-minutes, end the session at the 25 minute mark, to give both of you some time for paperwork. Similarly, if a client is signed up for an hour or 90 minutes, end ten minutes early (at the 50 or 80 minute mark). That leaves time to fill out the paperwork, make any copies you need to, put reference materials away, etc.

It's our instinct to want to help a client as much as we can, right up until the last second, but if you get behind, you may cheat another client out of a full session in the process. If you are working a four 4 hour shift and you have eight 8 clients each with thirty minute 30 minute appointments, you can see how every minute is going to be valuable to each of them. This is also a good reason not to be late. You also cheat the clients when you come to a session tired and worn out from working non-stop; those five or ten minute breaks give your brain a chance to rest and refresh before the next client, which is especially important at the end of the semester when the UWC is busy and everyone is stressed.

**After Sessions**

**Ending a Session**

Before it is time to end the session, tell the client you are going to have to wrap it up, and ask if s/he or she has any more questions. You may want to also briefly list the issues you discussed in session and see if s/he or she is comfortable with what has been learned. You both need to fill out the rest of the feedback form, and you may need to copy and stamp it as proof of the visit. Ask if the client is interested in making another appointment (or suggest it; if you think it is warranted), and walk him/her to the appointment desk. Wish him/her luck, and put the feedback form (stapled to your copy of his/her paper) in the In-Box.

**Paperwork/Feedback Forms**

NOTE: The feedback forms are necessary for our recordkeeping purposes (i.e., for our annual database and, ultimately, our funding reports), so it is very important to complete all of the information correctly. If the person doing
data entry, Jodie and Gail, have to take the time to find the information, it needlessly extends the data entry process, which is tedious as it is. Additionally, if the client needs a copy for proof of the visit, it is important that the information accurately reflects the session.

We have two forms: the long form for clients visiting the UWC for the first time in a given academic year—defined as summer, fall, spring, and intersession—and the short form for any subsequent sessions or the first session of a new academic year. (See examples of both forms in the Appendices.)

See attached forms including a sample form that has been filled out correctly.

Feedback forms (and the correct completion of them) are the consultant's responsibility. If a client is new to the center (or has not been in since the beginning of summer school of the current academic year), s/he needs to fill out the long form; if s/he has been in during the academic year, s/he can fill out the short form. Before your client leaves, make sure that all of the information on the feedback form is filled in (e.g.—teacher's name, course information, etc.)

This information helps us understand who is using the center and why, which is important for UWC funding and making data entry easier. Think about saving Jodie and Gail data entry time.

Stamping

Make sure you ask if the client needs a copy of the paperwork for his/her teacher or professor. Often clients are required to come in or will receive extra credit if they do, and they will need proof of their visit. If this is the case, make a copy of the Feedback Form, stamp the COPY (not the original) with the stamp located on the front desk. Fill out the blanks from the stamp (i.e. stamp color, the date, and your initials) in pen, fill in the color of the stamp and the date in pen, put your initials after the date, and give it to the client. Then, staple the original feedback form to your copy of their work and place it in the Inbox.
Policies

Walk-ins

If you are the scheduled walk-in consultant tutor, treat it as you would any other 25-minute session, however, be especially conscious of time; as usually, when there is one walk-in, there are usually many. However, please do not go over time, even if no one is waiting. If your client needs more assistance, help him or her to make another appointment, and be sure to provide them with a copy of our brochure, with our phone number on it.

90-Minute Appointments

We no longer schedule 90-minute appointments automatically. If a graduate student wants to request a 90-minute appointment with a given tutor, the receptionist will ask the tutor if they are willing to work with that client for that long. The choice is up to you as the tutor: 90-minute sessions can be mentally draining in general, but especially if a requesting client works with particularly difficult or complex subject matter. If you think that you will not be able to give the client your full attention for the entire session, you should not feel obligated to accept; the client can always schedule two separate appointments if they need that much time.

No-show & Late Clients

The UWC No-Show Policy is as follows: If a client misses three appointments without calling to cancel, either he or she may only use the walk-in services for the rest of the semester.

The UWC Late Policy is as follows: If a client is more than 5 minutes late for a 25 minute session or 10 minutes late for a 50 or 90 minute session, the appointment may be cancelled, especially if there are people waiting or we are very busy. The policies are posted in the center but may need to be explained to clients from time to time.

Note: We have begun enforcing this policy more stringently in an attempt to curb tardiness. Thus, in most cases, a late client will not be allowed to change his or her 50 minute appointment (e.g. 10:00-11:00am) to a 25 minute appointment (e.g. 10:30-11:00am) to make up for it.

Groups

Sometimes you will be assigned to tutor an entire group of two or more clients who collaborated on one paper. This is a special challenge, but again, not that much different than a “regular” session.

If you get a group and the paper was written collaboratively, make sure all the members of that group are present first. This point is important: the UWC cannot tutor any group projects unless all group members attend, regardless of
whether how many people contributed to the writing, because we cannot tutor people who are not present; it borders on plagiarism (see the section on plagiarism for more information).

Our policy used to be that we would work on select sections of a paper if the group members who worked on those sections were present, but due to complications, we can no longer do so if the paper was written in sections with one author per section, you can only go over these sections whose authors are present. We can’t teach someone who isn’t there; it borders on plagiarism.

The following is an example of how you could explain this policy to clients who do not understand why we cannot work with them:

→ All writers must be present to go through a group paper; otherwise, it is a form of plagiarism. There are two reasons for this, both of which can minimize a person’s claim to authorship. One, because your friend contributed but he or she is not here, it is like you brought in someone else’s paper and changed it, which makes the paper your work, not your friend’s. Two, even if your friend takes my suggestions that you’ve written down and uses them, he or she is taking our ideas, our work from the session, and presenting it as his or her own without contributing to the revision directly. Being able to claim authorship is important because according to the Academic Integrity section of the NIU Undergraduate Catalog, “Students are considered to have cheated if they [. . .] turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else” (Northern Illinois University, 2011; emphasis added). We don’t want to get into trouble and neither do you and your friend. Next time, we will need all of the group members to come in.

This policy is explained in the Client FAQ and is displayed prominently on the UWC website as well.

→ Note: Please see the section on plagiarism for more information.

Assuming all group members are present, continue the appointment as usual. Then, Additionally, when you complete the paperwork for a group, please follow these procedures carefully:

→ Have each group member is required to have a separate formfill out a separate form.
→ Staple the draft to just one of the feedback forms.
→ Write “draft attached to ______’s form” on all the other feedback forms.
→ When you put the feedback forms/draft into the In-Box inbox, do not staple all of the documents together because each person counts as a session, and Jodie and I-Gail do not always know to look for multiple feedback forms stapled together, and each session equals potential funding.

→ remember sessions potentially equal funding!!!!
Exams

If a client comes in with a written exam, we cannot discuss ANYTHING but grammar and punctuation. Any discussion of content, theses, organization, or citation, etc. is not allowed because—otherwise, we are the ones taking the test! You cannot tell the client that there are other problems either, even if you do not point out specifically where. If there are exceptions for specific classes, Gail or Jodie will let you know.

Not Doing Sessions

The only legitimate reason for not doing a session is if the client brings in a draft for a class you are also taking or teaching or if one client comes in with a group paper (see the section on Groups for more information). In this former instance, let a member of senior staff know right away so the session can be switched to another consultant tutor.

If you are uncomfortable working on a paper of a particular topic, talk to Gail or Jodie. While we will do our best to accommodate you, this may not always be possible. Remember, your job is to act as a prepared reader and responder, and as such, you may disagree with the client; are providing feedback; however, by providing that kind of feedback, you will help the client understand that not every audience will agree with his or her position. See the “Grin and Bear It” article, located in the articles section of your binder, for tips on how to do this.
Challenges

Unfamiliar Subjects

The first (or second or twenty-fifth) time you work with a graduate student, an unfamiliar documentation style, or a paper on biophysics or 17th century philosophy, you may feel overwhelmed, lost, or maybe even a little bit "stupid." But, rest assured, we have all felt that way about some session we've have worked on. Remember: we hired you because you are bright, intelligent, witty, and charming. You can do this. You are a prepared reader and responder.

Don't be afraid to ask the client questions of the client. Don't be afraid to tell him or her you know nothing about biophysics or 17th century philosophy the topic at hand—ask for some clarification background. If you are lost, just ask questions and help the client clarify the explanations. Generally, the client will be very happy to discuss the project with you, which can benefit him or her as much as it does you. Encouraging clients to articulate their ideas helps them think through what they are saying and how they are, or perhaps should be, saying it.

In any case, And, frankly, you do not need a firm grasp of economics or engineering to help a client work on his or her project. His or her grasp of language in the document should make the topic largely understandable regardless of prior knowledge help you understand the topic. Some clients may tell you otherwise—that their subject matter is too difficult or will not make sense to you, so they do not need you to check content—but that usually is not the case. We all have a comfort level—but don't be afraid to reach beyond it.

Different-Challenging Clients

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

While all clients are individuals with different concerns individual learning issues, there are some learning issues common to ELLs as a group. These include including article use, denotation/connotation, vocabulary, word forms, preposition use, verb tenses, and more. There are a number of handouts to help you address these issues, but
really, working with ELLs is similar to working with native English speakers. In both instances, you should tackle higher-order concerns first (e.g., fulfilling the assignment requirements, organization, etc.) and then attempt to explain the lower-order concerns. Occasionally, some ELL clients will want to practice their pronunciation and conversational skills with you. These are usually fun sessions; just make sure to be patient, enunciate, and have a dictionary handy.

CLIENTS WITH LEARNING DISABLED DISABILITIES

There are a number of learning disabilities that affect writing skills including familiar ones like dyslexia and not so familiar ones like expressive language disorder. Some signs of a learning disability might include difficulty in with reading or writing, memory, attention, comprehension, logic or reasoning, and/or social cues.

However, even if we notice one of these issues, we are not allowed to ask if a client has a learning disability. If they themselves are aware of it, it is their choice whether or not to disclose it; some will, and some will not. If you suspect that a client you are working with has an undiagnosed or undisclosed learning disability, there are resources available for both you and, most importantly, your client, and you should contact Jodie or Gail as soon as possible after your session. You may provide information about the CAAR office or counseling services, but you cannot tell the client to go to either of these offices or directly contact the resources about a client.

RESISTANT CLIENTS

Sadly, there will always be those clients who are resistant to tutoring for a variety of reasons: they feel they do not need help, they feel stupid or embarrassed, they resent being required to come, or they feel it’s a waste of their time. These sessions can be very frustrating experiences for consultants, but it is worth keeping in mind that the clients may not understand the process. Thankfully, sometimes we can identify these situations and still have a productive session by trying to address the client’s concerns and putting him or her at ease.

Identifying Resistance: You will be able to easily spot the following traits of resistant clients: easily traits:

- They do not take notes.
- They don’t speak or are argumentative.
- They talk excessively about things not related to the session or to writing in an attempt to distract the tutor.
- They ask the tutor to do their work for them, directly or indirectly.

All of these behaviors are contradictory to a productive session and to our mission as consultants. So, what should we do?

Handling Resistant Clients: Here are some strategies for getting a session back on track:
Try talking about something of another subject besides school for a bit while and then casually try to casually bring them back around to the subject of their paper again.

Try a version of the silent treatment: ask a directed question and silently wait for the answer.

Be honest forward: tell them you feel like the session could be going better and ask them if there's is anything wrong.

Gently remind them gently that this is their paper and their grade on the line and that, while you want to help, you cannot do that unless they participate.

Try a version of the silent treatment: ask a directed question and silently wait for the answer.

Offer to reschedule. Let them know that you understand that it's hard to be productive some days. If you they do want to reschedule, also let them know that their next appointment doesn't have to be with you.

Special Cases: Sometimes, a client will tell you he or she is only interested in getting the feedback form and does not need a session. After trying the above strategies, if the client still refuses to participate in the session, write the following statement on the feedback form prior to copying and stamping it for them: "The client was only interested in securing the feedback form and was not actively engaged in the tutoring process." Even though it might be a little nerve-wracking to write something negative knowing the client will see your comments, it is important to notify the professor that his or her student did not meet the assignment requirements. When a professor has a student make an appointment with the UWC, whether it is required or for extra credit, the expectation is that a student (a) will participate in at least a 25-minute appointment and (b) will participate in said appointment, and the feedback form is proof that the client has met these two conditions. To just give a client a stamped copy of the feedback form when he or she has not actively participated in a session is dishonest and not in the spirit of the UWC's mission.

You may also encounter clients who are less than polite, and while it is always important to remain professional, you do not have to tolerate excessively rude or disrespectful behavior. If someone is openly hostile, verbally or physically harassing, or otherwise threatening you, please let Gail or Jodie know right away. They will step in and let the client know that his or her conduct is unacceptable and, if necessary, ask him or her to leave.

If the client tells you s/he is only interested in getting the feedback form and does not actively participate in the session, write the following statement on the feedback form prior to copying/stamping the form: "The client was only interested in securing the feedback form and was not actively engaged in the tutoring process."

Plagiarism

According to the section on Academic Misconduct in 2011-2012 Undergraduate Catalog, plagiarism, whether intentional or not, includes improper or missing citations for work that is directly quoted or paraphrased as well as
claims of sole authorship when there are other contributors (Northern Illinois University, 2011). For the UWC, this
definition means that plagiarism plays a role in many other policies and explain why we require clients bring two
copies of their work (see page ___ ) and why all members must be present to tutor group work (see page ___ ) ; it also
gives us a standard to refer to when tutoring clients who use research in their work.

If you suspect a client has plagiarized (often you will notice a tone-change in tone or a change in the level
language used in these cases), address the concept openly—without making an accusation WITHOUT-MAKING-AN
ACCUSATION. You can simply ask, "Are these words and ideas based on some of your research?" Most
clients do not intentionally use other peoples' work, or and sometimes, they simply do not understand the rules
of citation (e.g. they do not know that paraphrases must be cited). This issue is something we can definitely help
them with. Technically, the client has not committed plagiarism until the document is turned in for a grade; therefore,
we cannot turn a client him/her into his/her instructor/professor. We can, however, help the client learn how
to document sources accurately and explain the potential consequences for the first offense: minimally, failure of the
assignment and, possibly, failure of the course with documentation submitted to the Judicial Affairs Office as part of
the client's permanent record. If it is not the first offense, the client will probably be academically dismissed from NIU.

**General Tips**

**Tutoring Skills and Strategies**

After assessing your clients' needs and setting goals with them, the only thing left to do is tutor. To be a successful
tutor, you must take on your part is the ability to assess a client's writing needs, to talk about writing and the
writing process, and to listen, which is the most crucial skill of them all.

+ ability to talk about writing and the writing process (which you all have)
+ ability to assess a client's writing needs (which comes with practice)
+ ability to listen—Listening is crucial. The UWC Writing Center is a service that is offered for the clients
to help with them accomplishing their goals. To this end, we want the clients to guide their own sessions by telling us
what their concerns are. Many clients in some cases, they know what they struggle with, their issues already, so and we need to use listening as our primary assessment tool. In addition, also, in most cases, because in most cases they know the subject they are writing about better than we do, and we need to listen to them and defer to their knowledge of about the field.

Some other useful strategies include

- Habit of modeling good scholastic behavior—
  - Modeling is using your writing as an example of good scholastic behavior. Not a single one of us has all of the answers. When you get stumped by a question from your client, look at it as an opportunity to model good client behavior. Studying habits: ask a peer or boss, use reference books, or look something up on the internet. If you admit that you don’t know what a word means (or how to spell it) and pull out a dictionary, your clients are all the more likely to pull out their dictionary next time they get stuck on a word.

- Being tactful, but honest but tactful—
  - Clients need to know honestly what their writing issues are. Likely because no one has wanted to offend them. Too many clients are never told in clear language just where their troubles lie, what they need to improve on, so they cannot work to become better. However, it does no one any good to be scared away by rude, insensitive consultants! Do not be cruel, do not pick on the client (his or her writing abilities or personality), do not “grade” him or her (it is not your place as a peer), and do not say things that are not constructive. Instead, be tactful, compassionate, and empathetic but also honest about the issues you see. For example, you can say, Say: “You know, I’ve noticed a couple of things about your paper that are grammar-related, but really the biggest thing I see, and what I would like to spend the most time on, is that the verb tense shifts from present to past and back to present. Here are some examples of what I mean.” Don’t be cruel, don’t pick on the client (either his writing or his person), don’t “grade” him/her (it’s not your place as a peer), and don’t say things that aren’t constructive. Instead, be tactful, compassionate, empathetic, but honest about the issues you see.

- Picking your battles—
  - There is absolutely no need or reason to argue with a client. Nothing we do is worth raising voices over. If s/he or she absolutely refuses to hear what you are saying about an issue that you think is important (e.g., repetition, for instance), simply move on to something else. Ultimately, this is his/her paper, and if you’ve presented your concerns tactfully and honestly, it is his/her choice whether or not to follow your advice. If it is not just a certain piece of advice
s/he or she is not interested in and the client strikes you as being overly-resistant and not interested in being in session in the first place, please see the section on resistant clients.

TTutoring Tips process by (Ildikó Carrington)

+ Have the client sum up what s/he wants to accomplish in the draft and how s/he has developed it.

+ As the client reads, take short notes on your copy of the draft (if you have one). Try to prompt the client to talk about the concerns you see in the draft rather than pointing out directly what you think needs work. In order to facilitate learning, try to prompt the client to talk about the concerns you see in the draft rather than pointing out directly what you think needs work and how you would fix it. Some questions you can ask to get the client thinking about revisions include

** What was your intended purpose? Do you think the paper accomplishes this purpose?

** Why did you choose that quotation?

** How do you think someone might disagree with your point here?

** Which of your sources might help you to support this idea?

** How could you further develop this idea?

** Where in the draft might it be more effective to ask these questions?

** Who might benefit from reading this paper when it is finished? How can we tailor this section to that audience?

** How else could you say this?

** What connections could you make between these paragraphs? These sections?

** What might be a more effective word choice? How would it convey a more persuasive or appropriate tone?

+ Always encourage the client to write notes, outlines, ideas, etc. Do not under any circumstances make a copy of the uwc draft for the client or give your notes to the client! They are the property of the uwc (considered work product) and are used to monitor how well we do our jobs.

+ If you do not know the answer to a client’s question, ask another consultant or check the UWC resources.
Interpersonal Relationships

Clients

The consultant/tutor-client relationship is a unique one. You are their peers, not teachers, but still, you are imparting knowledge to them, and at times, that can feel strange—especially when working with clients who are required to come here. You can alleviate this awkwardness—basically by being yourself, open and friendly, but also professional at the same time. You do not have to reveal any personal information about yourself other than your name—but if you would like to use yourself as an example, however, to illustrate a writing concept, and if it is appropriate, that is your prerogative. Similarly, while you want to listen to your clients' needs, and sometimes it is helpful for them to get some things off their chest, you are free to guide the conversation back to the task at hand (writing)—at any time. Sometimes conversations that are not about writing can help break the ice, loosen clients up, or help them refocus their ideas (everyone needs to vent sometimes), but at the same time, it is important to remember why you are both there; you do not have to engage in small talk or chit chat if that makes you uncomfortable, and you should feel free to guide the conversation back to the task at hand at any time. There is information in this binder on what to do if a client is resistant to tutoring. If a client tries to discuss inappropriate things with you, threatens you, or makes you uncomfortable, see Gail or Jodie right away. You will be asked to document the experience—minimally for UWC records and perhaps for the Judicial Affairs office.

Professors

There is an invisible third person present at every session: the client’s teacher/professor. It is s/he who gave the assignment, and s/he who will be judging the work. Often, we are required to interpret the teacher’s assignment/directions or meaning, handwriting, etc.—for the client. Again, helping clients become successful in college includes encouraging modeling good scholarly behavior, and developing relationships with their professors is one very good way of doing that.

Remember; do not criticize the teacher/professor, their his or her comments, or an assignment in front of the client, regardless of how you feel. The reason for this policy is twofold. First, it is not your place to evaluate the professor. It may be tempting to criticize the professor or mock the assignment prompt in order to gain a rapport with the client, but it is inappropriate and does not model good scholastic behavior for the client. Second, speaking badly of the professor that limits his or her credibility in the eyes of the client and will, in turn, lessen the effort that client will put into that assignments, which does not benefit the client and is counterproductive to the UWC’s goals. Do your best to help the client fulfill the assignment based on your own knowledge of what has been assigned. If the client is confused by a concept or forgot to write something the teacher said, encourage him/her to check the Blackboard or WebBoard, to email the instructor, or to drop by during office hours. Again, helping clients become
successful in college includes encouraging good scholarly behavior, and developing relationships with their professors is one very good way of doing that.

**Fellow Consultants**

As it was mentioned in the introduction at the very beginning, you all have some special qualities in common with each other, or you would not be here including—a love of writing, and the comprehension of how important it is to success in college, as well as the desire to help others, and the understanding and compassion it takes to do so; and a comprehension of how important writing is to success in college. Because of those similarities, we hope that you all will all be able to get along with each other and that some of you may develop friendships. However, but all we ask is that you be courteous, respectful, and kind to your fellow consultants. If there are any disagreements among you, please see Gail or Jodie to discuss it.

**Senior Staff**

Even though Jodie (tech specialist) and Gail (director) have different positions within the UWC, we are the senior staff, and as such, we collaborate on decisions regarding ——UWC operations—this responsibility includes scheduling walk-in sessions when you have cancellations and occasionally stepping into your sessions. We are not trying to overwork you or undermine your authority though.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to come to us with any questions at any time. We are nice. We care. And chances are at least one of us has been there.
Mentorship Program

Mentoring and Being Mentored

Each new tutor will be assigned a mentor, or an experienced tutor. This person will be the one you can ask questions, vent to, and/or tap for resources throughout the semester. In reality, we are all available for such assistance, and you should never hesitate to ask us, but if you would like a go-to person who is familiar with your strengths and weaknesses as a tutor, then your mentor will be there.

New tutors will meet with their mentors on a weekly basis the first semester. Mentors and new tutors will need to go through the following mentorship agreement together, sign it, and return a copy to Gail. Initially, the new tutor consultant will watch sessions performed by the mentor and other UWC consultants, and then she or he will be observed conducting a session. After completing training and all observations, if the mentor feels the new tutor is ready to starting conducting sessions on his or her own, and discussing the session with the mentor, the new person shall be “loosed upon the public at large.”

For examples of the mentorship agreement and observation forms, please see Appendices  and .

New consultants will meet with their mentors on a weekly basis the first semester. You and your mentor can go through the following mentorship agreement together and return a copy to Gail.
Employee Performance

Observation/NIU work performance

At some point during the course of the semester, you will be observed by Jodie or Gail, or a designated graduate assistant. Observations are not meant to be scary or threatening, or Big-Brother-ish; it is simply the best way to accomplish three things:
• to see how effective our training is,
• to see if there are areas we need to discuss with you personally, and
• to see if the level of tutoring is fairly consistent from tutor to tutor.

Policy Violation
On the rare occasion that a UWC policy is violated by an employee, a formal written report will be drafted. After three written violations, the employee will be terminated.

For examples of the policy violation form, please see Appendix [ ]

NOTES:
+—See the next pages for copies of the employee performance documents
+—Copies of any and all documents will be given to the consultant as well as kept in his/her UWC personnel folder.
General Personnel Information

Payroll

NIU university employees are paid bimonthly on a two week delay. Pay periods are from the 1st of the month to the 15th and from the 16th to the end of the month, and paydays are on the 15th and the last working day of the month. Because of the delay, income earned in the first pay period of, for example, September is paid on the second payday (i.e., September 30th), and income earned in the second pay period of September is paid on the first payday of the next month (i.e., October 15th). If either payday falls on a weekend or holiday, you will receive payment on the closest business day before it, or whatever working day is closest to the 15th and end of the month. (Good luck figuring that out)! For example, if in October the 31st falls on a Sunday, you would be paid on Friday the 29th.

If you are paid hourly (i.e., you are peer tutor, extra help, or a student receptionist), make sure you write in your hours on the timesheet. Every two weeks, either Jodie or Gail will have an official timesheet for the university printed off that you will need to check for accuracy and then sign.

Mailboxes

Each tutor has a personalized mail pouch; graduate students can find theirs on the grad office door, while undergraduates can find theirs, are located on the kitchen door, both arranged alphabetically by your last name. Please check them frequently as that is where you will find your payroll information and, of course, unbelievably important memos, notes, etc.

Kitchen Use

CLEANUP

Feel free to use what you need to in the kitchen, but PLEASE please clean up after yourself. That means doing your own dishes, wiping up spills on the counter or in the microwave, and turning off the oven and coffee maker when you are finished using them. Do not let your food sit in the refrigerator until it spoils and makes the entire refrigerator smell bad. It becomes a science experiment. We're a writing center, not a chemistry lab!!!

Also, do not rinse any put food down the sink. The garbage disposal does not work, so the sink will back up, which is (not a pretty sight and not worth the plumbers rolling their eyes at our inability to follow directions). On the plus-side, the coffee and tea and miscellaneous foods on the shelves are for all to share, so help yourself!
FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Any miscellaneous food on the shelves are for all to share. If you would like to make coffee, we have a coffeemaker and assorted leftover creamer and sugar, but you will need to bring your own grounds.

Pop and water are 50 cents each; there is a money jar (i.e. a coffee mug) in the kitchen to put your money in. So that everyone can continue to enjoy this privilege, please do not help yourself to a beverage unless you have the money to pay for it that day. It is easy to forget to bring money in the next day, and if the money jar is short, whoever is picking up drinks and snacks will have to pay some money out of pocket. On the plus side, the coffee, teas, and miscellaneous food on the shelves are for all to share, so help yourself.

Voicing Concerns

If at any point you have a problem of any kind, either with a co-worker or a client, you should contact Gail or Jodie immediately. Our door is always open (unless it is closed, in which case knock first please). We take your concerns seriously and want to do what we can do to ensure a positive, friendly, and professional workplace.
Personnel Policies

Scheduling

- Design a schedule that will be consistent all semester. If you need to change, it is not as problematic with the electronic system, but you may already have appointments scheduled. Shifting appointments is not always as easy as it might seem.
- Set your schedule so that you can arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of your shift to allow time to settle in and be ready to begin.

Time-off/Calling in Sick

- If you need to take a day(s) off, call to let Jodie or Gail know when as soon as possible. We will be happy to block out your times and shift appointments if possible. Please do not just call or email that you are not coming in. While we realize that conflicts can occur at the last minute, if you are booked, you are responsible for those sessions.
- If you are going to be late, call so we can make adjustments or let the client know you are on your way.
- We understand that everyone gets the sniffles, gets stuck in traffic, has family emergencies, and sometimes just spaces out. And while we try to be accommodating in these circumstances, please be aware that sometimes it simply isn’t possible. If you are sick or going to be late, by all means, call, and we will try to shuffle your clients to other consultants but know that you are ultimately responsible for covering your shift if we can’t make enough adjustments.
- If you are sick, call us to let us know about how long you think you will be out. Please do not just email us that you are not coming in.
Important: As much as you may want to come in when you are sick, please stay home, especially if you are contagious. While it is difficult to shift appointments, we do not want to make our clients sick, so it is better for you to stay home and recuperate.

Leaving Work Early

If you finish early, do not just leave without first asking if there is anything you can do (e.g. take a walk-in appointments, help with online sessions, filing, cover reception, etc.). Chances are good that we will let you leave early, but do not just disappear. Make sure your time card reflects the time you actually leave to the closest quarter hour unless Gail or Jodie tells you otherwise.

If you are a peer consultant or a student receptionist, make sure you write in your hours on the timesheet before you leave work every day. This will help immensely when it's payroll time.

If you used any dishes, etc. in the kitchen or brought them into another area, please clean up before you leave. You might also browse the appointment schedule to see what your next work day looks like.
Miscellany

Contact Information

HOURS
Generally, we are open Monday through Thursday, excluding school holidays and breaks, from 8:00am to 5:00pm at Stevenson South and from 5:30pm to 8:30pm at Founders 302.

PHONE NUMBERS
Our phone number at Stevenson South is (815) 752-6636, and our phone number at Founders 302 is (815) 752-6630.

LOCATION
Our main center is in Stevenson South, B Tower, Lower Level, and our satellite center is in Founders Memorial Library, room 302.

WEB ADDRESS
Our web address is http://www.uwc.niu.edu.

Special Projects

SERVICE PRESENTATIONS
Occasionally, Jodie or Gail will ask you to give a presentation promoting the UWC to a class here at NIU (e.g. UNIV 101, ENGL 103). You will want to hand out brochures; explain what the UWC is all about including what services we offer, where we are located, and how to contact us; and then ask if anyone has any questions. The consultant goes to individual classrooms armed with knowledge and brochures to introduce the UWC to a whole new batch of clients. If you love the UWC and think you can confidently speak of its virtues in front of a large group, please see Gail or Jodie to volunteer.

SEMINARS
Periodically throughout the course of the semester, we will be giving seminars about topics that are of frequent interest to our clients: for example, how to write resumes/cover letters, how to write a statement of purpose, what belongs in a personal statement, or what an APA paper should look like—and things of that nature. If you have any presentation suggestions or if you have special knowledge of a particular topic of these or any topic you think would be helpful for our clients and if you are interested in sharing that knowledge, please see Gail or Jodie.
HANDOUTS

It is helpful to have a collection of handouts (hard copy and/or electronic) to share with the staff and the clients, so from time to time, you will be asked, or you could volunteer, to develop information that explains some facet of writing in a particular genre or disciplines or that gives tips on how to navigate components of the writing process, for example.

UWC Resources

COMPUTERS

If you look around, you'll notice that we have quite a few computers in the UWC. The computers in the UWC are for you to use with your clients, but you are (of course) free to use them during a break as long as no client is waiting for one. We do ask, however, that if you are on the internet, please use common sense as far as the content of the websites you are visiting.

Do not download materials to these computers; unless you are working with an emailed document. In this case, if you just save the document without designating a specific place for saving it, it will save as a template and be extremely difficult to retrieve, even if you have revised or edited it. When you are opening an emailed document, save it to the desktop or to the student folder (if there is one on the desktop), work on the document, and then minimize it while resending it in an email. Once it is successfully sent, close the document, and drag it to the trash.

PRINTERS

We do not have printers for client or OR-tutor use. There is a 24-hour computer lab on the other side of the stairs. To print in the computer lab, clients will need to have an NIU OneCard to swipe before retrieving the printed documents.

- **Note:** We do not have any control over the computer lab – including the printers. On rare occasions, we have gone over to help a client figure out a problem. But, it is very rare.

COPIERS

We do not have a budget to make copies of consultants’ or clients’ papers or other non-UWC documents. However, if you want to make copies of some of the handouts in this binder to give to the client or copy the feedback form for the client's professor, you may, then the copier in the main room is available for such purposes.
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Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the University Writing Center (UWC)! It takes a certain type of person to want to be a writing tutor. You were selected for a number of reasons:

• you have a passion for talking about language use and stylistic challenges in writing,
• you are compassionate and comfortable with all kinds of people and ability levels,
• you understand that it is impossible to be a successful college student without at least a basic proficiency in writing, and
• you want to help the UWC clients attain that proficiency.

This final point is what the UWC is all about. Our job is help our clients become better writers through the tutoring process, which can be somewhat confusing or frustrating at times for the tutor, but is also incredibly satisfying. The following Tutor Manual is designed to provide you with basic information about working at the UWC and tutoring in general as well as answer any questions you may have about our policies and procedures in hopes of making your transition a little smoother. Happy reading and remember: learn ‘em good!

UWC Purpose & Goals

WHAT UWC WILL DO

As our brochure states, we are available to help clients become more proficient at writing for any type of project: academic (i.e. any class or assignment), creative, and personal (e.g. resumes, application letters). Some specific things we as consultants can do to address clients’ needs include

• identifying clients’ writing strengths and weaknesses
• providing strategies for research documentation
• modeling strategies for prewriting
• helping organize thoughts or paragraphs
• explaining revision tactics
• teaching self-editing skills
• illustrating source documentation using the proper format (e.g. APA or MLA)
• helping organize and practice presentations with clients
• teaching computer (word processing) skills

WHAT UWC WILL NOT DO

We do not proofread papers, nor do we so-called fix them. Why not? These actions will not help clients in the long run. To simply change a comma to a semi-colon for them will never teach them how to use commas and semi-
colons. Additionally, fixing their papers minimizes the clients' ability to claim sole authorship, which is akin to plagiarism. (For more information, see the section on plagiarism.) To ensure that clients' work is always their own, we conduct client-guided sessions. Through dialogue, talking with each writer about his or her strengths and challenges, we actively engage writers in a process of learning writing-related skills to apply to a broad range of future endeavors rather than just meet the needs of a particular assignment. We attempt to answer clients' writing questions, often using their own work as an example, and encourage them to practice what they have learned. Our goal is to help clients become better writers, and to do so, we facilitate learning by making sessions client-focused, not just paper-focused. Remember, no client is going to leave the center with a perfect paper, but he or she should leave with a better understanding of writing.
Procedures

Before Sessions

ARRIVING/CHECKING SCHEDULE

- Put your belongings (e.g. purses, backpacks, etc.) in the kitchen or grad office. There are hangers in the kitchen. While we have only had a few problems with belongings walking off, it is better to be safe than sorry.
- Check your schedule when you first arrive and periodically throughout your shift (especially if you are going to run to the computer lab or go upstairs to get food) as you may have additions and/or cancellations. It is your responsibility to know when your appointments are and be prepared for them. However, please do not interrupt whoever is working reception to ask to see your schedule if he or she is working productively. If you have an appointment coming in, stick around so that the receptionist does not have to come find you.

However, do not block the traffic pattern around the desk. The clients have to sign in, and the students/faculty moving in and out of the classroom will need space to walk without interrupting the sessions.

DOWN TIME/BEING HERE

- If you are not in a session, you may work in the kitchen/break room, in the grad office, at one of the tables on the computers in the back, or in the computer lab next door.
- If you do leave our area, make sure you let the receptionist know where we can find you just in case your client comes in and you are not back yet. However, the receptionists should not have to come find you each time, so keep an eye on the clock so that you can be ready for your clients when they arrive. You may conduct your sessions in the front or back area, depending on where you and the client feel most comfortable. You may also use the conference room if it is available. If you are working with a group, the back tables or the conference room are probably more practical since those options are usually quieter and offer more space to spread out.
- Occasionally, especially near the beginning of the semester, there will be times when you are scheduled to work and you do not have clients. In this event, ask if there is anything that needs to be done. Sometimes we could use assistance at the front desk or in the kitchen, or we may need help with filing or creating handouts, newsletter articles, and/or seminars! If it is a really slow day, feel free to do your homework. In fact, tutors hard at work studying is a good scholastic behavior to model for our clients.

BEGINNING A SESSION
When you have a client, greet them pleasantly, tell him or her your name, and ask what he or she is working on. After spending a couple of minutes getting to know the client and determining what he or she is working on, the first things to do are always just basic administrative tasks:

- Ask the client to fill out the first parts of the Feedback Forms. (See examples of both the short and long forms in the Appendices)
- Ask if he or she has brought two copies of their draft. We ask clients to bring two copies so that they will take their own notes on their respective copies and we can keep the copy with the tutor’s comments. This promotes ownership of the revision and the session for the client and keeps session records for us.
  - **Note:** Please see the section on plagiarism for more information.
- If he or she only brought one copy, explain our policy, write “no copy” on the feedback form, and then put your pencil down. It is now up to him/her to take notes.
- Finally, ask him or her if he or she has any materials related to the assignment from his or her professor (e.g. prompts, rubrics, texts, etc.). Try to first establish if he or she understands the assignment and then determine what his or her writing concerns are.

**During Sessions**

**ASSESSING A CLIENT’S NEEDS**

It may be an oversimplification, but it is helpful to separate clients’ writing errors into two major categories:

- higher-order concerns (or global errors)
  - organization of ideas
  - thesis development
  - argument logic
  - proper citation adherence to prompt instructions
- lower-order concerns (or local errors)
  - verb tense
  - comma use
  - spelling errors

Higher-order concerns should be addressed first if for no other reason than because it might not do a client any good to change a comma if he or she needs to eliminate the whole sentence. Perhaps more importantly, however, a well thought out paper with a clear thesis will receive higher marks than a paper with perfect grammar that lacks organization or has faulty logic. We are doing the client a disservice if we merely proofread a paper when there are bigger issues. Appointments often go by quickly, so try to tackle global concerns first; a spell-checker will catch a fair amount of what proofreading is left.
Sometimes, what a client tells you he or she needs help with differs from what you believe to be the main writing issue. He or she might believe that he or she just needs help knowing when to use pronouns, but you may notice that he or she has no clear thesis and that the paper is all over the place.

- In this case, tell the client that while his or her pronoun use is something you want to work on if you can, for this particular paper, you are more worried about the lack of a thesis, and it might be in his or her best interest to start there.

Similarly, some clients have more issues than you think you can conceivably cover in the allotted time.

- In this scenario, tackle higher order concerns first, then errors that are the most recurring. If after you have discussed a solid organizational scheme for the paper you notice that the author just does not know how to use it's vs. its, find a number of those examples in the paper and teach the client the correct usage. Then, have him or her try to identify the error on his or her own and self-correct. At the end of the appointment, explain clearly what errors you are seeing in the paper, and encourage him or her to make another appointment. Make sure that he or she knows about his or her specific writing issues—for instance, tell him or her that next time you want to definitely work on subject-verb agreement and transition usage. Then, if for some reason he or she does not get to work with you, he or she still has something concrete to tell the tutor he or she does work with.

**Reading Aloud**

From a practical standpoint, you cannot assess a client's needs without reading a sample of his or her work. There are different ways to do this, and every tutor has a different strategy: some tutors prefer to have the client read, while others opt to read themselves; and some tutors correct errors sentence by sentence, while others read the entire paragraph before making any suggestions.

However, at some point in the session (unless you are just brainstorming), you will want to do some reading aloud. Why? Reading aloud prevents the tutoring process from devolving into editing; when the tutor reads silently, it is easier to make corrections without the client's participation, which is not in keeping with the collaborative nature of tutoring. Additionally, it is often easier to hear a goofy sentence than to see it.

Sometimes, you might want to scan it quickly before you do any reading aloud (this can be done while the client is filling out the paperwork), especially when a client says he or she is having trouble telling if the paper flows or figuring out where to put paragraphs. Scanning first can help you assess if, indeed, higher-order concerns should be addressed first. You may want him or her to gloss each paragraph individually, coming up with a one or two word...
summary of each. Then, help him/her retroactively construct an outline (i.e. make a reverse outline) and fit each paragraph where it logically should go. Finally, after reordering the paragraphs, you might want to start reading aloud.

Ultimately, the best way to assess a client’s needs is to (a) figure out what the teacher expects of them, (b) listen to what their own writing concerns are, and (c) read the paper aloud and draw conclusions based on your professional judgment.

**Goal Setting**

Be honest with yourself and the client about what you can do in the allotted time. If he or she has signed up for a 25 minute session and brought eight pages, tell them kindly that you will more than likely not get through that amount of text because even in the best case scenario, most times a tutor can only get through 3-4 pages in a 25 minute session. Give them the opportunity to make an additional appointment.

Remember too: we are not miracle workers. We cannot turn a D paper into an A paper, nor should we. All we can do is try to teach our clients something that they can use for this assignment and eventually, over time, they hopefully will have enough knowledge and confidence to begin writing those A papers from the get go.

**Keeping Track of Time**

Time management is very important, especially during midterms and finals, the busiest times of the year for us. If a client is signed up for 30-minutes, end the session at the 25 minute mark. Similarly, if a client is signed up for an hour or 90 minutes, end ten minutes early (at the 50 or 80 minute mark). That leaves time to fill out the paperwork, make any copies you need to, put reference materials away, etc.

It is your instinct to want to help a client as much as we can, right up until the last second, but if you get behind, you may cheat another client out of a full session in the process. If you are working a four hour shift and you have eight clients each with 30 minute appointments, you can see how every minute is going to be valuable to each of them. You also cheat the clients when you come to a session tired and worn out from working non-stop; those five or ten minute breaks give your brain a chance to rest and refresh before the next client, which is especially important at the end of the semester when the UWC is busy and everyone is stressed.

**After Sessions**

**Ending a Session**
Before it is time to end the session, tell the client you are going to have to wrap it up, and ask if he or she has any more questions. You may also want to briefly list the issues you discussed in session and see if he or she is comfortable with what has been learned. You both need to fill out the rest of the feedback form, and you may need to copy and stamp it as proof of the visit. Ask if the client is interested in making another appointment (or suggest it if you think it is warranted), and walk him/her to the appointment desk. Wish him/her luck, and put the feedback form (stapled to your copy of his or her paper) in the inbox.

**Paperwork/Feedback Forms**

The feedback forms are necessary for our recordkeeping purposes (i.e. for our annual database and, ultimately, our funding reports), so it is very important to complete all of the information correctly. If the person doing data entry has to take the time to find the information, it needlessly extends the process, which is tedious as it is. Additionally, if the client needs a copy for proof of the visit, it is important that the information accurately reflects the session.

We have two forms: the long form for clients visiting the UWC for the first time in a given academic year—defined as summer, fall, spring, and intersession—and the short form for any subsequent sessions or the first session of a new academic year. (See examples of both forms in the Appendices.)

Feedback forms (and the correct completion of them) are the consultant's responsibility. Before your client leaves, make sure that all of the information on the feedback form is filled in (e.g., teacher's name, course information, etc.). This information helps us understand who is using the center and why, which is important for UWC funding and making data entry easier.

**Stamping**

Make sure you ask if the client needs a copy of the paperwork for his or her professor. Often clients are required to come in or will receive extra credit if they do, and they will need proof of their visit. If this is the case, make a copy of the feedback form, stamp the copy, not the original, with the stamp located on the front desk. Fill out the blanks from the stamp (i.e. stamp color, the date, and your initials) in pen, and give it to the client. Then, staple the original feedback form to your copy of their paper and place it in the inbox.
Walk-ins
If you are the scheduled walk-in tutor, treat it as you would any other 25-minute session but be especially conscious of time. If there is one walk-in, there are usually many. However, please do not go over time, even if no one is waiting. If your client needs more assistance, help him or her to make another appointment, and be sure to provide them with a copy of our brochure.

90-Minute Appointments
We no longer schedule 90-minute appointments automatically. If a graduate student wants to request a 90-minute appointment with a given tutor, the receptionist will ask the tutor if they are willing to work with that client for that long. The choice is up to you as the tutor: 90-minute sessions can be mentally draining in general, but especially if the requesting client works with particularly difficult or complex subject matter. If you think that you will not be able to give the client your full attention for the entire session, you should not feel obligated to accept; the client can always schedule two separate appointments if they need that much time.

No-show & Late Clients
If a client misses three appointments without calling to cancel, he or she may only use the walk-in services for the rest of the semester.

If a client is more than 5 minutes late for a 25 minute session or 10 minutes late for a 50 or 90 minute session, the appointment may be cancelled, especially if there are people waiting or we are very busy. The policies are posted in the center but may need to be explained to clients from time to time.

Note: We have begun enforcing this policy more stringently in an attempt to curb tardiness. Thus, in most cases, a late client will not be allowed to change his or her 50 minute appointment (e.g. 10:00-11:00am) to a 25 minute appointment (e.g. 10:30-11:00am) to make up for it.

Groups
If you get a group, make sure all the members are present first. This point is important: the UWC cannot tutor any group projects unless all group members attend, regardless of whether how many people contributed to the writing.
because we cannot tutor people who are not present; it borders on plagiarism (see the section on plagiarism for more information).

Our policy used to be that we would work on select sections of a paper if the group members who worked on those sections were present, but due to complications, we can no longer do so.

The following is an example of how you could explain this policy to clients who do not understand why we cannot work with them:

All writers must be present to go through a group paper; otherwise, it is a form of plagiarism. There are two reasons for this, both of which can minimize a person's claim to authorship. One, because your friend contributed but he or she is not here, it is like you brought in someone else's paper and changed it, which makes the paper your work, not your friend's. Two, even if your friend takes my suggestions that you've written down and uses them, he or she is taking our ideas, our work from the session, and presenting it as his or her own without contributing to the revision directly. Being able to claim authorship is important because according to the Academic Integrity section of the NIU Undergraduate Catalog, "Students are considered to have cheated if they [. . .] turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else" (Northern Illinois University, 2011; emphasis added). We don't want to get into trouble and neither do you and your friend. Next time, we will need all of the group members to come in.

This policy is explained in the Client FAQ and is displayed prominently on the UWC website as well.

Note: Please see the section on plagiarism for more information.

Assuming all group members are present, continue the appointment as usual. Then, when you complete the paperwork for the group, please follow these procedures carefully:

- Have each group member fill out a separate form.
- Staple the draft to just one of the feedback forms.
- Write "draft attached to ______'s form" on all the other feedback forms.
- When you put the feedback forms into the inbox, do not staple all of the documents together because each person counts as a session. Jodie and Gail do not always know to look for multiple feedback forms stapled together, and each session equals potential funding.

Exams

If a client comes in with a written exam, we cannot discuss anything but grammar and punctuation. Any discussion of content, thesis, organization, or citation, etc. is not allowed because otherwise, we are the ones taking the test. You cannot tell the client that there are other problems either, even if you do not point out specifically where. If there are exceptions for specific classes, Gail or Jodie will let you know.
Not Doing Sessions

The only legitimate reason for not doing a session is if the client brings in a draft for a class you are also taking or teaching or if one client comes in with a group paper (see the section on Groups for more information). In the former instance, let a member of senior staff know right away so the session can be switched to another tutor.

If you are uncomfortable working on a paper of a particular topic, talk to Gail or Jodie. While we will do our best to accommodate you, it may not always be possible. Remember, your job is to act as a prepared reader and responder, and as such, you may disagree with the client. However, by providing that kind of feedback, you will help the client understand that not every audience is going to agree with his or her position.
Challenges

Unfamiliar Subjects

The first (or second or twenty-fifth) time you work with a graduate student, an unfamiliar documentation style, or a paper on biophysics or 17th century philosophy, you may feel overwhelmed, lost, or maybe even a little bit stupid. But, rest assured, we have all felt that way about some session we have worked on. Remember: we hired you because you are intelligent, witty, and charming. You can do this. You are a prepared reader and responder.

Do not be afraid to ask the client questions. Do not be afraid to tell him or her you know nothing about the topic at hand—ask for some clarification. Generally, the client will be very happy to discuss the project with you, which can benefit him or her as much as it does you. Encouraging clients to articulate their ideas helps them think through what they are saying and how they are, or perhaps should be, saying it.

In any case, you do not need a firm grasp of economics or engineering to help a client work on his or her project. His or her grasp of language in the document should make the topic largely understandable regardless of prior knowledge. Some clients may tell you otherwise—that their subject matter is too difficult or will not make sense to you, so they do not need you to check content—but that usually is not the case. We all have a comfort level, but do not be afraid to reach beyond it.

Challenging Clients

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

While all clients are individuals with different concerns, there are some learning issues common to ELLs as a group including article use, denotation/connotation, vocabulary, word forms, preposition use, verb tense, and more. There are a number of handouts to help you address these issues, but really, working with ELLs is similar to working with native English speakers. In both instances, you should tackle higher-order concerns first (e.g. fulfilling the assignment requirements, organization, etc.) and then attempt to explain the lower-order concerns. Occasionally, some ELL clients will want to practice their pronunciation and conversational skills with you. These are usually fun sessions; just make sure to be patient, enunciate, and have a dictionary handy.

CLIENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

There are a number of learning disabilities that affect writing skills including familiar ones like dyslexia and not so familiar ones like expressive language disorder. Some signs of a learning disability might include difficulty with reading or writing, memory, attention, comprehension, logic or reasoning, and/or social cues.
However, even if we notice one of these issues, we are not allowed to ask if a client has a learning disability. If they themselves are aware of it, it is their choice whether to disclose it; some will, and some will not. If you suspect that a client you are working with has an undiagnosed or undisclosed learning disability, there are resources available for both you and, most importantly, your client, and you should contact Jodie or Gail as soon as possible after your session. You may provide information about the CAAR office or counseling services, but you cannot tell the client to go to either of these offices or directly contact the resources about a client.

**Resistant Clients**

Sadly, there will always be those clients who are resistant to tutoring for a variety of reasons: they feel they do not need help, they feel stupid or embarrassed, they resent being required to come, or they feel it is a waste of their time. These sessions can be very frustrating experiences for consultants, but it is worth keeping in mind that clients may not understand the process. Thankfully, sometimes we can identify these situations and still have a productive session by trying to address the client's concerns and putting him or her at ease.

**Identifying Resistance.** You will be able to spot the following traits of resistant clients easily:

- They do not take notes.
- They do not speak or are argumentative.
- They talk excessively about things not related to the session or to writing in an attempt to distract the tutor.
- They assume the tutor to do their work for them, directly or indirectly.

**Handling Resistant Clients.** Here are some strategies for getting a session back on track:

- Talk about something besides school for a while and then casually try to bring them back to the subject of their paper again.
- Be honest: tell them you feel like the session could be going better and ask them if there is anything wrong.
- Remind them gently that this is their paper and their grade on the line and that, while you want to help, you cannot do that unless they participate.
- Try a version of the silent treatment: ask a directed question and silently wait for the answer. If they do not want to reschedule, let them know that their next appointment does not have to be with you.

**Special Cases:** Sometimes, a client will tell you he or she is only interested in getting the feedback form and does not need a session. After trying the above strategies, if the client still refuses to participate in the session, write the following statement on the feedback form prior to copying and stamping it for them: “The client was only interested in securing the feedback form and was not actively engaged in the tutoring process.” Even though it might be a little
nerve-wracking to write something negative knowing the client will see your comments, it is important to notify the professor that his or her student did not meet the assignment requirements. When a professor has a student make an appointment with the UWC, whether it is required or for extra credit, the expectation is that a student (a) will participate in at least a 25-minute appointment and (b) will participate in said appointment and the feedback form is proof that the client has met these two conditions. To just give a client a stamped copy of the feedback form when he or she has not actively participated in a session is dishonest and not in the spirit of the UWC’s mission.

You may also encounter clients who are less than polite, and while it is always important to remain professional, you do not have to tolerate excessively rude or disrespectful behavior. If someone is openly hostile, verbally or physically harassing, or otherwise threatening you, please let Gail or Jodie know right away. They will step in and let the client know that his or her conduct is unacceptable and, if necessary, ask him or her to leave.

Plagiarism

According to the section on Academic Misconduct in 2011-2012 Undergraduate Catalog, plagiarism, whether intentional or not, includes improper or missing citations for work that is directly quoted or paraphrased as well as claims of sole authorship when there are other contributors (Northern Illinois University, 2011). For the UWC, this definition means that plagiarism plays a role in many of other policies and explain why we require clients bring two copies of their work (see page 2) and why all members must be present to tutor group work (see page 7); it also gives us a standard to refer to when tutoring clients who use research in their work.

If you suspect a client has plagiarized (often you will notice a change in tone or in the level of language used in these cases), address the concept openly without making an accusation. You should ask, “Are these words and ideas based on some of your research?” Most clients do not intentionally use other peoples’ work, and sometimes, they simply do not understand the rules of citation (e.g. they do not know that paraphrases must be cited). This issue is something we can definitely help them with. Technically, the client has not committed plagiarism until the document is turned in for a grade; therefore, we cannot turn a client into his or her instructor professor. We can, however, help the client learn how to document sources accurately and explain the potential consequences for the first offense: minimally, failure of the assignment and, possibly, failure of the course with documentation submitted to the Judicial Affairs Office as part of the client’s permanent record. If it is not the first offense, the client will probably be academically dismissed from NIU.
General Tips

Tutoring Skills and Strategies

To be a successful tutor, all it really takes on your part is the ability to assess a client’s writing needs, to talk about writing and the writing process, and to listen, which is the most crucial skill of them all. The UWC is a service that offer clients help with accomplishing their goals. To this end, we want clients to guide their own sessions by telling us what their concerns are. Many clients know what they struggle with already, so we need to use listening as our primary assessment tool. In addition, because in most cases they know the subject they are writing about better than we do, we need to listen to them and defer to their knowledge of the field.

Some other useful strategies include

• modeling good scholastic behavior—
  • No one has all of the answers. When you get stumped by a question from your client, look at it as an opportunity to model studying habits: ask a peer or boss, use reference books, or look something up on the internet. If you admit that you do not know what a word means (or how to spell it) and pull out a dictionary, your clients are more likely to pull out their dictionary next time they get stuck on a word.

• being honest but tactful—
  • Clients need to know honestly what their writing issues are. Likely because no one has wanted to offend them, many clients are never told in clear language what they need to improve on, so they cannot work to become better. However, it does no one any good to be scared away by rude, insensitive consultants. Do not be cruel, do not pick on the client (his or her writing abilities or personality), do not “grade” him or her (it is not your place as a peer), and do not say things that are not constructive. Instead, be tactful, compassionate, and empathetic but also honest about the issues you see. For example, you can say, “You know, I’ve noticed a couple of things about your paper that are grammar-related, but really the biggest thing I see, and what I would like to spend the most time on, is that the verb tense shifts from present to past and back to present. Here are some examples of what I mean.”

• picking your battles—
  • There is absolutely no reason to argue with a client. Nothing we do is worth raising voices over. If he or she absolutely refuses to hear what you are saying about an issue that you think is important (e.g., repetition), simply move on to something else. Ultimately, this is his or her paper, and if you have presented your concerns tactfully and honestly, it is his or her choice whether to follow your advice. If it is not just a certain piece of advice he or she is not interested in and the client strikes
you as being overly-resistant and not interested in session in the first place, please see the section on resistant clients.

Tutoring Tips by Ildikó Carrington

In order to facilitate learning, try to prompt the client to talk about the concerns you see in the draft rather than pointing out directly what you think needs work and how you would fix it. Some questions you can ask to get the client thinking about revisions include the following:

- What was your intended purpose? Do you think the paper accomplishes this purpose?
- Why did you choose that quotation?
- How do you think someone might disagree with your point here?
- Which of your sources might help you to support this idea?
- How could you further develop this idea?
- Where in the draft might it be more effective to ask these questions?
- Who might benefit from reading this paper when it is finished? How can we tailor this section to that audience?
- How else could you say this?
- What connections could you make between these paragraphs? These sections?
- What might be a more effective word choice? How would it convey a more persuasive or appropriate tone?
Interpersonal Relationships

Clients

The tutor-client relationship is a unique one. You are their peers, not teachers, but still, you are imparting knowledge to them, and at times, that can feel strange—especially when working with clients who are required to come here. You can alleviate this awkwardness by being yourself, open and friendly, but also professional at the same time. You do not have to reveal any personal information about yourself other than your name, but if you would like to use yourself as an example to illustrate a writing concept, that is your prerogative. Similarly, while conversations that are not about writing can help break the ice, loosen clients up, or help them refocus their ideas (everyone needs to vent sometimes), it is important to remember why you are both there; you do not have engage in small talk or chit chat if that makes you uncomfortable, and you should feel free to guide the conversation back to the task at hand at any time. If a client tries to discuss inappropriate things with you, threatens you, or makes you uncomfortable, see Gail or Jodie right away. You will be asked to document the experience—minimally for UWC records and perhaps for the Judicial Affairs office.

Professors

There is an invisible third person present at every session: the client’s professor. It is he or she who gave the assignment and he or she who will be judging the work. Often, we are required to interpret the professor’s directions or handwriting for the client. Again, helping clients become successful in college includes encouraging modeling good scholarly behavior, and developing relationships with their professors is one very good way of doing that.

Remember: do not criticize the professor, his or her comments, or his or her assignment in front of the client, regardless of how you feel. The reason for this policy is twofold. First, it is not your place to evaluate the professor. It may be tempting to criticize the professor or mock the assignment prompt in order to gain a rapport with the client, but it is inappropriate and does not model good scholastic behavior for the client. Second, speaking badly of the professor limits his or her credibility in the eyes of the client and will, in turn, lessen the effort that client will put into that assignment, which does not benefit the client and is counterproductive to the UWC’s goals.

Fellow Consultants

As it was mentioned in the introduction, you all have some special qualities in common with each other, or you would not be here including a love of writing and the comprehension of how important it is to succeed in college, as well as a desire to help others and the understanding and compassion it takes to do so. Because of these similarities, we hope that you all will be able to get along with each other and that some of you may develop friendships. However, all
we ask is that you be courteous, respectful, and kind to your fellow consultants. If there are any disagreements among you, please see Gail or Jodie to discuss it.

Senior Staff

Even though Jodie, tech specialist, and Gail, director, have different positions within the UWC, we are the senior staff, and as such, we collaborate on decisions regarding UWC operations—this responsibility includes scheduling walk-in sessions when you have cancellations and occasionally stepping into your sessions. We are not trying to overwork you or undermine your authority though.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to come to us with any questions at any time. We are nice, we care, and chances are at least one of us has been there.
Mentorship Program

Mentoring and Being Mentored

Each new tutor will be assigned a mentor, or an experienced tutor. This person will be the one you can ask questions, vent to, and/or tap for resources throughout the semester. In reality, we are all available for assistance, and you should never hesitate to ask us, but if you would like a go-to person who is familiar with your strengths and weaknesses as a tutor, then your mentor will be there.

New tutors will meet with their mentors on a weekly basis the first semester. Mentors and new tutors will need to go through the following mentorship agreement together, sign it, and return a copy to Gail. Initially, a new tutor will watch sessions performed by the mentor and other UWC consultants, and then he or she will be observed conducting a session. After completing training and all observations, if the mentor feels the new tutor is ready to starting conducting sessions on his or her own, he or she shall be "loosed upon the public at large."

For examples of the mentorship agreement and observation forms, please see Appendices ___ and ___.
**Employee Performance**

**Observation/NIU work performance**

At some point during the course of the semester, you will be observed by Jodie or Gail. Observations are not meant to be scary or threatening; it is simply the best way to accomplish three things:

- to see how effective our training is,
- to see if there are areas we need to discuss with you personally, and
- to see if the level of tutoring is fairly consistent from tutor to tutor.

**Policy Violation**

On the rare occasion that a UWC policy is violated by an employee, a formal written report will be drafted. After three written violations, the employee will be terminated.

For examples of the policy violation form, please see Appendix.
General Personnel Information

Payroll

NIU university employees are paid bimonthly on a two-week delay. Pay periods are from the 1st of the month to the 15th and from the 16th to the end of the month. Paydays are on the 15th and the last working day of the month. Because of the delay, income earned in the first pay period of, for example, September is paid on the second payday (i.e. September 30th), and income earned in the second pay period of September is paid on the first payday of the next month (i.e. October 15th). If either payday falls on a weekend or holiday, you will receive payment on the closest business day before it. For example, if in October the 31st falls on a Sunday, you would be paid on Friday the 29th.

If you are paid hourly (i.e. you are peer tutor, extra help, or a student receptionist), make sure you write in your hours on the timesheet. Every two weeks, either Jodie or Gail will have an official timesheet for the university printed off that you will need to check for accuracy and then sign.

Mailboxes

Each tutor has a personalized mail pouch; graduate students can find theirs on the grad office door, while undergraduates can find theirs kitchen door, both arranged alphabetically by last name. Please check them frequently as that is where you will find your payroll information and, of course, unbelievably important memos.

Kitchen Use

CLEANUP

Feel free to use what you need to in the kitchen, but please clean up after yourself. That means doing your own dishes, wiping up spills on the counter or in the microwave, and turning off the oven and coffeemaker when you are finished using them. Do not let your food sit in the refrigerator until it spoils and makes the entire refrigerator smell bad. Also, do not rinse any food down the sink. The garbage disposal does not work, so the sink will back up, which is not a pretty sight and not worth the plumbers rolling their eyes at our inability to follow directions.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Any miscellaneous food on the shelves are for all to share. If you would like to make coffee, we have a coffeemaker and assorted leftover creamer and sugar, but you will need to bring your own grounds.

Pop and water are 50 cents each; there is a money jar (i.e. a coffee mug) in the kitchen to put your money in. So that everyone can continue to enjoy this privilege, please do not help yourself to a beverage unless you have the money to pay for it that day. It is easy to forget to bring money in the next day, and if the money jar is short, whoever is picking up drinks and snacks will have to pay some money out of pocket.
Voicing Concerns

If at any point you have a problem of any kind, either with a coworker or a client, you should contact Gail or Jodie immediately. Our door is always open. We take your concerns seriously and want to do what we can do to ensure a positive, friendly, and professional workplace.
Personnel Policies

Scheduling

- Design a schedule that will be consistent all semester. If you need to change, it is not as problematic with the electronic system, but you may already have appointments scheduled. Shifting appointments is not always as easy as it might seem.
- Set your schedule so that you can arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of your shift to allow time to settle in and get ready to begin.

Time-off/Calling in Sick

- If you need to take a day(s) off, call to let Jodie or Gail know when as soon as possible. We will be happy to block out your times and shift appointments if possible.
- If you are going to be late, call so we can make adjustments or let the client know you are on your way.
- If you are sick, call us to let us know about how long you think you will be out. Please do not just email us that you are not coming in.
  - Important: As much as you may want to come in when you are sick, please stay home, especially if you are contagious. While it is difficult to shift appointments, we do not want to make our clients sick, so it is better for you to stay home and recuperate.

Leaving Work Early

⚠️ If you finish early, do not leave without first asking if there is anything you can do (e.g. take a walk-in appointment, help with filing, cover reception, etc.). Chances are good that we will let you leave early, but do not just disappear.

⚠️ Make sure your time card reflects the time you actually leave to the closest quarter hour unless Gail or Jodie tells you otherwise.
**Miscellany**

**Contact Information**

**HOURS**
Generally, we are open Monday through Thursday, excluding school holidays and breaks, from 8:00am to 5:00pm at Stevenson South and from 5:30pm to 8:30pm at Founders 302.

**PHONE NUMBERS**
Our phone number at Stevenson South is (815) 752-6636, and our phone number at Founders 302 is (815) 752-6630.

**LOCATION**
Our main center is in Stevenson South, B Tower, Lower Level, and our satellite center is in Founders Memorial Library, room 302.

**WEB ADDRESS**
Our web address is http://www.uwc.niu.edu.

**Special Projects**

**SERVICE PRESENTATIONS**
Occasionally, Jodie or Gail will ask you to give a presentation promoting the UWC to a class here at NIU (e.g. UNIV 101, ENGL 103). You will want to hand out brochures; explain what the UWC is all about including what services we offer, where we are located, and how to contact us; and then ask if anyone has any questions. If you love the UWC and think you can confidently speak of its virtues in front of a large group, please see Gail or Jodie to volunteer.

**SEMINARS**
Periodically throughout the course of the semester, we will give seminars about topics that are of frequent interest to our clients: for example, how to write resumes/cover letters, how to write a statement of purpose, what belongs in a personal statement, or what an APA paper should look like. If you have any presentation suggestions or if you have special knowledge of a particular topic and you are interested in sharing that knowledge, please see Gail or Jodie.

**HANDOUTS**
It is helpful to have a collection of handouts to share with the staff and the clients, so from time to time, you will be asked or you could volunteer to develop information that explains some facet of writing in a particular genre, discipline or that gives tips on how to navigate components of the writing process, for example.

**UWC Resources**

**Computers**

The computers in the UWC are for you to use with your clients, but you are of course free to use them during a break as long as no client is waiting for one. We do ask, however, that if you are on the internet, please use common sense as far as the content of the websites you are visiting.

Do not download materials to these computers unless you are working with an emailed document. In this case, if you just save the document without designating a specific place for saving it, it will save as a template and be extremely difficult to retrieve, even if you have revised or edited it. When you are opening an emailed document, save it to the desktop or to the student folder (if there is one on the desktop), work on the document, and then minimize it while resending it in an email. Once it is successfully sent, close the document, and drag it to the trash.

**Printers**

We do not have printers for client or tutor use. There is a 24-hour computer lab on the other side of the stairs. To print in the computer lab, clients will need to have an NIU OneCard to swipe before retrieving the printed documents.

*Note:* We do not have any control over the computer lab including the printers. On rare occasions, we have gone over to help a client figure out a problem, but it is very rare.

**Copiers**

We do not have a budget to make copies of consultants' or clients' papers or other non-UWC documents. However, if you want to make copies of a handout to give to the client, you may.
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Welcome

Welcome to the University Writing Center (UWC)! It takes a certain type of person to want to be a writing tutor. You were selected for a number of reasons:

• you have a passion for talking about language use and stylistic challenges in writing,
• you are compassionate and comfortable with all kinds of people and ability levels,
• you understand that it is impossible to be a successful college student without at least a basic proficiency in writing, and
• you want to help the UWC clients attain that proficiency.

This final point is what the UWC is all about. Our job is help our clients become better writers through the tutoring process, which can be somewhat confusing or frustrating at times for the tutor but is also incredibly satisfying. The following Tutor Manual is designed to provide you with basic information about working at the UWC and tutoring in general as well as to answer any questions you may have about our policies and procedures in hopes of making your transition a little smoother. Happy reading and remember: learn ’em good!

UWC Purpose & Goals

WHAT UWC WILL DO

As our brochure states, we are available to help clients become more proficient at writing for any type of project: academic (i.e. any class or assignment), creative, or personal (e.g. resumes, application letters). Some specific things we as consultants can do to address clients' needs include

• identifying clients’ writing strengths and weaknesses
• providing strategies for research and documentation
• modeling strategies for prewriting
• helping organize thoughts or paragraphs
• explaining revision tactics
• teaching self-editing
• illustrating source documentation using the proper format (e.g. APA or MLA)
• helping organize and practice presentations with clients
• teaching computer (word processing) skills

WHAT UWC WILL NOT DO

We do not proofread papers, nor do we so-called fix them. Why not? These actions will not help clients in the long run. To simply change a comma to a semi-colon for them will never teach them how to use commas and semi-
colons. Additionally, fixing their papers minimizes the clients' ability to claim sole authorship, which is akin to plagiarism. (For more information, see the section on plagiarism.) To ensure that clients' work is always their own, we conduct client-guided sessions. Through dialogue, talking with each writer about his or her strengths and challenges, we actively engage writers in a process of learning writing-related skills to apply to a broad range of future endeavors rather than to just meet the needs of a particular assignment. We attempt to answer clients' writing questions, often using their own work as an example, and encourage them to practice what they have learned. Our goal is to help clients become better writers, and to do so, we facilitate learning by making sessions client-focused, not just paper-focused. Remember: no client is going to leave the UWC with a perfect paper, but he or she should leave with a better understanding of writing.
Procedures

Before Sessions

ARRIVING/CHECKING SCHEDULE

• Put your belongings (e.g. purses, backpacks, etc.) in the kitchen/break room or grad office. There are hangers in the kitchen. While we have only had a few problems with belongings walking off, it is better to be safe than sorry.

• Check your schedule when you first arrive and periodically throughout your shift (especially if you are going to run to the computer lab or go upstairs to get food) as you may have additions and/or cancellations. It is your responsibility to know when your appointments are and be prepared for them. However, please do not interrupt whoever is working reception to ask to see your schedule if he or she is working productively. If you have an appointment coming in, stick around so that the receptionist does not have to come find you, but do not block the traffic pattern around the desk. The clients have to sign in, and the students/faculty moving in and out of the classroom will need space to walk without interrupting the sessions.

DOWN TIME/BEING HERE

• If you are not in a session, you may work in the kitchen/break room, in the grad office, at one of the tables on the computers in the back, or in the computer lab next door.

• If you do leave our area, make sure you let the receptionist know where we can find you just in case your client comes in and you are not back yet. However, the receptionists should not have to come find you each time, so keep an eye on the clock so that you can be ready for your clients when they arrive. You may conduct your sessions in the front or back area, depending on where you and the client feel most comfortable. You may also use the conference room if it is available. If you are working with a group, the back tables or the conference room are probably more practical since those options are usually quieter and offer more space to spread out.

• Occasionally, especially near the beginning of the semester, there will be times when you are scheduled to work and you do not have clients. In this event, ask if there is anything that needs to be done. Sometimes, we could use assistance at the front desk or in the kitchen, or we may need help with filing or creating handouts, newsletter articles, and/or seminars! If it is a really slow day, feel free to do your homework. In fact, tutors hard at work studying is good scholastic behavior to model for our clients.
BEGINNING A SESSION

When you have a client, greet them pleasantly, tell him or her your name, and ask what he or she is working on. After spending a couple of minutes getting to know the client and determining what he or she is working on, the first things to do are always just basic administrative tasks:

♦ Ask the client to fill out the first parts of the Feedback Forms. (See examples of both the short and long forms in the Appendices.

♦ Ask the client if he or she has brought two copies of their draft. We ask clients to bring two copies so that they will take notes on their own copies and we can keep the copy with the tutor’s comments. This practice promotes ownership of the revision and the session for the client and keeps session records for us. Note: Please see the section on Plagiarism for more information.

♦ If he or she only brought one copy, explain our policy, write “no copy” on the feedback form, and then put your pencil down. It is now up to him/her to take notes.

♦ Finally, ask him or her if he or she has any materials related to the assignment from his or her professor (e.g. prompts, rubrics, texts, etc.). Try to first establish if he or she understands the assignment and then determine what his or her writing concerns are.

During Sessions

ASSESSING A CLIENT’S NEEDS

It may be an oversimplification, but it is helpful to separate clients’ writing errors into two major categories:

♦ higher-order concerns (or global errors)
  • organization of ideas
  • thesis development
  • argument logic
  • proper citation
  • adherence to prompt instructions

♦ lower-order concerns (or local errors)
  • verb tense
  • comma use
  • spelling errors

Higher-order concerns should be addressed first if for no other reason than because it might not do a client any good to change a comma if he or she needs to eliminate the whole sentence. Perhaps more importantly, however, a well thought out paper with a clear thesis will receive higher marks than a paper with perfect grammar that lacks organization or has faulty logic. We are doing the client a disservice if we merely proofread a paper when there are
bigger issues. Appointments often go by quickly, so try to tackle global concerns first; a spell-checker will catch a fair amount of what proofreading is left.

Sometimes, what a client tells you he or she needs help with differs from what you believe to be the main writing issue. He or she might believe that he or she just needs help knowing when to use pronouns, but you may notice that he or she has no clear thesis and that the paper is all over the place.

- In this case, tell the client that while his or her pronoun use is something you want to work on if you can, for this particular paper, you are more worried about the lack of a thesis, and it might be in his or her best interest to start there.

Similarly, some clients have more issues than you think you can conceivably cover in the allotted time.

- In this scenario, tackle higher-order concerns first, then the errors that are the most recurring. If after you have discussed a solid organizational scheme for the paper you notice that the author just does not know how to use it's vs. its, find a number of those examples in the paper and teach the client the correct usage. Then, have him or her try to identify the error on his or her own and self-correct. At the end of the appointment, explain clearly what errors you are seeing in the paper, and encourage him or her to make another appointment. Make sure that he or she knows about his or her specific writing issues—for instance, tell him or her that next time, you want to definitely work on subject-verb agreement and transition usage. Then, if for some reason he or she does not get to work with you, he or she still has something concrete to tell the next tutor he or she does work with.

**Reading Aloud**

From a practical standpoint, you cannot assess a client's needs without reading a sample of his or her work. There are different ways to do this, and every tutor has a different strategy: some tutors prefer to have the client read, while others opt to read themselves; and some tutors correct errors sentence by sentence, while others read the entire paragraph, or even entire sections, before making any suggestions.

However, at some point in the session (unless you are just brainstorming), you will want to do some reading aloud. Why? Reading aloud prevents the tutoring process from devolving into editing; when the tutor reads silently, it is easier to make corrections without the client's participation, which is not in keeping with the collaborative nature of tutoring. Additionally, it is often easier to hear a goofy sentence than to see it.

Sometimes, you might want to scan it quickly before you do any reading aloud (this can be done while the client is filling out the paperwork), especially when a client says he or she is having trouble telling if the paper flows or figuring
Tutoring Information

out where to put paragraphs. Scanning first can help you assess if, indeed, higher-order concerns should be addressed first. You may want him or her to gloss each paragraph individually, coming up with a one or two word summary of each. Then, help him or her retroactively construct an outline (i.e. make a reverse outline) and fit each paragraph where it logically should go. Finally, after reordering the paragraphs, you might want to start reading aloud.

Ultimately, the best way to assess a client’s needs is to (a) figure out what the teacher expects of them, (b) listen to what their own writing concerns are, and (c) read the paper aloud and draw conclusions based on your professional judgment.

GOAL SETTING

Be honest with yourself and the client about what you can do in the allotted time. If he or she has signed up for a 25 minute session and brought eight pages, tell him or her kindly that you will more than likely not get through that amount of text because even in the best case scenario, most times a tutor can only get through 3-4 pages in a 25 minute session. Give them the opportunity to make an additional appointment.

Remember too: we are not miracle workers. We cannot turn a D paper into an A paper, nor should we. All we can do is try to teach our clients something that they can use for this assignment so that eventually, over time, they hopefully will have enough knowledge and confidence to begin writing those A papers from the get go.

KEEPING TRACK OF TIME

Time management is very important, especially during midterms and finals, the busiest times of the year for us. If a client is signed up for 30-minutes, end the session at the 25 minute mark. Similarly, if a client is signed up for an hour or 90 minutes, end ten minutes early (at the 50 or 80 minute mark). That leaves time to fill out the paperwork, make any copies you need to, put reference materials away, etc.

It is our instinct to want to help a client as much as we can, right up until the last second, but if you get behind, you may cheat another client out of a full session in the process. If you are working a four hour shift and you have eight clients each with 30 minute appointments, you can see how every minute is going to be valuable to each of them. You also cheat the clients when you come to a session tired and worn out from working non-stop; those five or ten minute breaks give your brain a chance to rest and refresh before the next client, which is especially important at the end of the semester when the UWC is busy and everyone is stressed.

After Sessions

ENDING A SESSION
Before it is time to end the session, tell the client you are going to have to wrap it up, and ask if he or she has any more questions. You may also want to briefly list the issues you discussed in session and see if he or she is comfortable with what has been learned. You both need to fill out the rest of the feedback form, and you may need to copy and stamp it as proof of the visit. Ask if the client is interested in making another appointment (or suggest it if you think it is warranted), and walk him or her to the appointment desk. Wish him/her luck, and put the feedback form in the inbox.

**Paperwork/Feedback Forms**

The feedback forms are necessary for our recordkeeping purposes (i.e. for our annual database and, ultimately, our funding reports), so it is very important to complete all of the information correctly. If the person doing data entry has to take the time to find the information, it needlessly extends the process, which is tedious enough as it is. Additionally, if the client needs a copy for proof of the visit, it is important that the information accurately reflects the session.

We have two forms: the long form for clients visiting the UWC for the first time in a given academic year—defined as summer, fall, spring, and intersession—and the short form for any subsequent sessions or the first session of a new academic year. (See examples of both forms in the Appendices.)

Feedback forms (and the correct completion of them) are the tutor’s responsibility. Before your client leaves, make sure that all of the information on the feedback form is filled in (e.g. teacher’s name, course information, etc.) This information helps us understand who is using the center and why, which is important for UWC funding and making data entry easier.

**Stamping**

Make sure you ask if the client needs a copy of the paperwork for his or her professor. Often clients are required to come in or will receive extra credit if they do, and they will need proof of their visit. If this is the case, make a copy of the feedback form, stamp the copy, not the original, with the stamp located on the front desk. Fill out the blanks from the stamp (i.e. stamp color, the date, and your initials) in pen, and give it to the client. Then, staple the original feedback form to your copy of his or her paper and place it in the inbox.
Policies

Walk-ins

If you are the scheduled walk-in tutor, treat it as you would any other 25-minute session but be especially conscious of time because when there is one walk-in, there are usually many. However, please do not go over time, even if no one is waiting. If your client needs more assistance, help him or her to make another appointment, and be sure to provide them with a copy of our brochure.

90-Minute Appointments

We no longer schedule 90-minute appointments automatically. If a graduate student wants to request a 90-minute appointment with a given tutor, the receptionist will ask the tutor if they are willing to work with that client for that long. The choice is up to you as the tutor: 90-minute sessions can be mentally draining in general but especially if the requesting client works with particularly difficult or complex subject matter. If you think that you will not be able to give the client your full attention for the entire session, you should not feel obligated to accept; the client can always schedule two separate appointments if they need that much time.

No-show & Late Clients

If a client misses three appointments without calling to cancel, he or she may only use the walk-in services for the rest of the semester.

If a client is more than 5 minutes late for a 25 minute session or 10 minutes late for a 50 or 90 minute session, the appointment may be cancelled, especially if there are people waiting or we are very busy. The policies are posted in the center and on the website, but they may need to be explained to clients from time to time.

Note: We have begun enforcing this policy more stringently in an attempt to curb tardiness. Thus, in most cases, a late client will not be allowed to change his or her 50 minute appointment (e.g. 10:00-11:00am) to a 25 minute appointment (e.g. 10:30-11:00am) to make up for it.

Groups

If you get a group, make sure all the members are present first. This point is important: the UWC cannot tutor any group projects unless all group members attend, regardless of whether how many people contributed to the writing, because we cannot tutor people who are not present; it borders on plagiarism (see the section on plagiarism for more information).
Our policy used to be that we would work on select sections of a paper if the group members who worked on those sections were present, but due to complications, we can no longer do so.

The following is an example of how you could explain this policy to clients who do not understand why we cannot work with them:

All writers must be present to go through a group paper; otherwise, it is a form of plagiarism. There are two reasons for this, both of which can minimize a person’s claim to authorship. One, because your friend contributed but he or she is not here, it is like you brought in someone else’s paper and changed it, which makes the paper your work, not your friend’s. Two, even if your friend takes my suggestions that you’ve written down and uses them, he or she is taking our ideas, our work from the session, and presenting it as his or her own without contributing to the revision directly. Being able to claim authorship is important because according to the Academic Integrity section of the NIU Undergraduate Catalog, “Students are considered to have cheated if they [ . . . ] turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else” (Northern Illinois University, 2011; emphasis added). We don’t want to get into trouble and neither do you and your friend. Next time, we will need all of the group members to come in.

This policy is explained in the Client FAQ and is displayed prominently on the UWC website as well.

- Note: Please see the section on Plagiarism for more information.

Assuming all group members are present, continue the appointment as usual. Then, when you complete the paperwork for the group, please follow these procedures carefully:
- Have each group member fill out a separate form.
- Staple the draft to just one of the feedback forms.
- Write “draft attached to ______’s form” on all the other feedback forms.
- When you put the feedback forms into the inbox, do not staple all of the documents together because each person counts as a session. Jodie and Gail do not always know to look for multiple feedback forms stapled together, and each session equals potential funding.

Exams

If a client comes in with a written exam, we cannot discuss anything but grammar and punctuation. Any discussion of content, thesis, organization, or citation is not allowed because otherwise, we are the ones taking the test. You cannot tell the client that there are other problems either, even if you do not point out specifically where. If there are exceptions for specific classes, Gail or Jodie will let you know.
Not Doing Sessions

The only legitimate reason for not doing a session is if the client brings in a draft for a class you are also taking or teaching or if one client comes in with a group paper (see the section on Groups for more information). In the former instance, let a member of senior staff know right away so the session can be switched to another tutor.

If you are uncomfortable working on a paper of a particular topic, talk to Gail or Jodie. While we will do our best to accommodate you, it may not always be possible. Remember: your job is to act as a prepared reader and responder, and as such, you may disagree with the client; however, by providing that kind of feedback, you will help the client understand that not every audience is going to agree with his or her position.
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Challenges

Unfamiliar Subjects

The first (or second or twenty-fifth) time you work with a graduate student, an unfamiliar documentation style, or a paper on biophysics or 17th century philosophy, you may feel overwhelmed, lost, or maybe even a little bit stupid. But, rest assured, we have all felt that way about some session we have worked on. Remember: we hired you because you are intelligent, witty, and charming. You can do this. You are a prepared reader and responder.

Do not be afraid to ask the client questions. Do not be afraid to tell him or her you know nothing about the topic at hand—ask for some clarification. Generally, the client will be very happy to discuss the project with you, which can benefit him or her as much as it does you. Encouraging clients to articulate their ideas helps them think through what they are saying and how they are, or perhaps should be, saying it.

In any case, you do not need a firm grasp of economics or engineering to help a client work on his or her project. His or her grasp of language in the document should make the topic largely understandable regardless of prior knowledge. Some clients may tell you otherwise—that their subject matter is too difficult or will not make sense to you, so they do not need you to check content—but that usually is not the case. We all have a comfort level, but do not be afraid to reach beyond it.

Challenging Clients

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

While all clients are individuals with different concerns, there are some learning issues common to ELLs as a group including article use, denotation/connotation, vocabulary, word forms, preposition use, verb tense, and more. There are a number of handouts to help you address these issues, but really, working with ELLs is similar to working with native English speakers. In both instances, you should tackle higher-order concerns first (e.g. fulfilling the assignment requirements, organization, etc.) and then attempt to explain the lower-order concerns. Occasionally, some ELL clients will want to practice their pronunciation and conversational skills with you. These are usually fun sessions; just make sure to be patient, enunciate, and have a dictionary handy.

CLIENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

There are a number of learning disabilities that affect writing skills including familiar ones like dyslexia and not so familiar ones like expressive language disorder. Some signs of a learning disability might include difficulty with reading or writing, memory, attention, comprehension, logic or reasoning, and/or social cues.
However, even if we notice one of these issues, we are not allowed to ask if a client has a learning disability. If they themselves are aware of it, it is their choice whether to disclose it; some will, and some will not. If you suspect that a client you are working with has an undiagnosed or undisclosed learning disability, there are resources available for both you and, most importantly, your client, and you should contact Jodie or Gail as soon as possible after your session. You may provide information about the CAAR office or counseling services, but you cannot tell the client to go to these offices or directly contact the resources about a client.

**RESISTANT CLIENTS**

Sadly, there will always be those clients who are resistant to tutoring for a variety of reasons: they feel they do not need help, they feel stupid or embarrassed, they resent being required to come, or they feel it is a waste of their time. These sessions can be very frustrating experiences for consultants, but it is worth keeping in mind that clients may not understand the process. Thankfully, sometimes we can identify these situations and still have a productive session by trying to address the client's concerns and putting him or her at ease.

**Identifying Resistance.** You will be able to spot the following traits of resistant clients easily:

- They do not take notes.
- They do not speak or are argumentative.
- They talk excessively about things not related to the session or to writing in an attempt to distract the tutor.
- They ask the tutor to do their work for them, either directly or indirectly.

**Handling Resistant Clients.** Here are some strategies for getting a session back on track:

- Talk about something besides school for a while and then casually try to bring them back to the subject of their paper again.
- Be honest: tell them you feel like the session could be going better and ask them if there is anything wrong.
- Remind them gently that this is their paper and their grade on the line and that, while you want to help, you cannot do that unless they participate.
- Try a version of the silent treatment: ask a directed question and silently wait for the answer. Offer to reschedule. Let them know that you understand that it is hard to be productive some days. If they do want to reschedule, let them know that their next appointment does not have to be with you.

**Special Cases:** Sometimes, a client will tell you he or she is only interested in getting the feedback form and does not need a session. If after trying the above strategies the client still refuses to participate in the session, write the following statement on the feedback form prior to copying and stamping it for them: "The client was only interested in securing the feedback form and was not actively engaged in the tutoring process." Even though it might be a little
nerve-wracking to write something negative knowing the client will see your comments, it is important to notify the professor that his or her student did not meet the assignment requirements. When a professor has a student make an appointment with the UWC, whether it is required or for extra credit, the expectation is that a student (a) will participate in at least a 25-minute appointment and (b) will participate in said appointment. The feedback form is proof that the client has met these two conditions. To just give a client a stamped copy of the feedback form when he or she has not actively participated in a session is dishonest and not in the spirit of the UWC’s mission.

You may also encounter clients who are less than polite, and while it is always important to remain professional, you do not have to tolerate excessively rude or disrespectful behavior. If someone is openly hostile, verbally or physically harassing, or otherwise threatening you, please let Gail or Jodie know right away. They will step in and let the client know that his or her conduct is unacceptable and, if necessary, ask him or her to leave.

**Plagiarism**

According to the section on Academic Misconduct in 2011-2012 Undergraduate Catalog, plagiarism, whether intentional or not, includes improper or missing citations for work that is directly quoted or paraphrased as well as claims of sole authorship when there are other contributors (Northern Illinois University, 2011). For the UWC, this definition means that plagiarism plays a role in many of other policies and explain why we require clients bring two copies of their work (see the section on Beginning a Session and why all members must be present to tutor group work (see the section on Groups); it also gives us a standard to refer to when tutoring clients who use research in their work.

If you suspect a client has plagiarized (often you will notice a change in tone or in the level of language used in these cases), address the concept openly without making an accusation. You should ask, “Are these words and ideas based on some of your research?” Most clients do not intentionally use other peoples’ work, and sometimes, they simply do not understand the rules of citation (e.g. they do not know that paraphrases must be cited). This issue is something we can definitely help them with. Technically, the client has not committed plagiarism until the document is turned in for a grade; therefore, we cannot turn a client into his or her professor. We can, however, help the client learn how to document sources accurately and explain the potential consequences for the first offense: minimally, failure of the assignment and, possibly, failure of the course with documentation submitted to the Judicial Affairs Office as part of the client’s permanent record. If it is not the first offense, the client will probably be academically dismissed from NIU.
Tutoring Skills and Strategies

To be a successful tutor, all it really takes on your part is the ability to assess a client's writing needs, to talk about writing and the writing process, and to listen, which is the most crucial skill of them all. The UWC is a service that offers clients help with accomplishing their goals. To this end, we want clients to guide their own sessions by telling us what their concerns are. Many clients know what they struggle with already, so we need to use listening as our primary assessment tool. In addition, because in most cases they know the subject they are writing about better than we do, we need to listen to them and defer to their knowledge of the field.

Some other useful strategies include

- modeling good scholastic behavior—
  - No one has all of the answers. When you get stumped by a question from your client, look at it as an opportunity to model studying habits: ask a peer or boss, use reference books, or look it up on the internet. If you admit that you do not know what a word means (or how to spell it) and pull out a dictionary, your clients will be more likely to pull out their dictionary next time they get stuck on a word.

- being honest but tactful—
  - Clients need to know honestly what their writing issues are. Likely because no one has wanted to offend them, many clients are never told in clear language what they need to improve on, so they cannot work to become better. However, it does no one any good to be scared away by rude, insensitive consultants. Do not be cruel, do not pick on the client (either his or her writing abilities or personality), do not "grade" him or her (it is not your place as a peer), and do not make comments that are not constructive. Instead, be tactful, compassionate, and empathetic but also honest about the issues you see. For example, you can say, "You know, I've noticed a couple of things about your paper that are grammar-related, but really the biggest thing I see, and what I would like to spend the most time on, is that the verb tense shifts from present to past and back to present. Here are some examples of what I mean."

- picking your battles—
  - There is absolutely no reason to argue with a client. Nothing we do is worth raising voices over. If he or she absolutely refuses to hear what you are saying about an issue that you think is important (e.g. repetition), simply move on to something else. Ultimately, this is his or her paper, and if you have presented your concerns tactfully and honestly, it is his or her choice whether to follow your advice. If it is not just a certain piece of advice he or she is not interested in and the client strikes
you as being overly-resistant and not interested in session in the first place, please see the section on Resistant Clients.

Tutoring Tips by Ildikó Carrington

In order to facilitate learning, try to prompt the client to talk about the concerns you see in the draft rather than pointing out directly what you think needs work and how you would fix it. Some questions you can ask to get the client thinking about revisions include the following:

• What was your intended purpose? Do you think the paper accomplishes this purpose?
• Why did you choose that quotation?
• How do you think someone might disagree with your point here?
• Which of your sources might help you to support this idea?
• How could you further develop this idea?
• Where in the draft might it be more effective to ask these questions?
• Who might benefit from reading this paper when it is finished? How can we tailor this section to that audience?
• How else could you say this?
• What connections could you make between these paragraphs? These sections?
• What might be a more effective word choice? How would it convey a more persuasive or appropriate tone?
Interpersonal Relationships

Clients

The tutor-client relationship is a unique one. You are their peers, not teachers, but still, you are imparting knowledge to them, and at times, that can feel strange—especially when working with clients who are required to come here.

You can alleviate this awkwardness by being yourself, open and friendly, but also professional at the same time. You do not have to reveal any personal information about yourself other than your name, but if you would like to use yourself as an example to illustrate a writing concept, that is your prerogative. Similarly, while conversations that are not about writing can help break the ice, loosen clients up, or help them refocus their ideas (everyone needs to vent sometimes), it is important to remember why you are both there; you do not have engage in small talk or chit chat if that makes you uncomfortable, and you should feel free to guide the conversation back to the task at hand at any time. If a client tries to discuss inappropriate things with you, threatens you, or makes you uncomfortable, see Gail or Jodie right away. You will be asked to document the experience—minimally for UWC records and perhaps for the Judicial Affairs office.

Professors

There is an invisible third person present at every session: the client's professor. It is he or she who gave the assignment and he or she who will be judging the work. Often, we are required to interpret the professor's directions or handwriting for the client. Again, helping clients become successful in college includes encouraging modeling good scholarly behavior, and developing relationships with their professors is one very good way of doing that.

Remember: do not criticize the professor, his or her comments, or his or her assignment in front of the client, regardless of how you feel. The reason for this policy is twofold. First, it is not your place to evaluate the professor. It may be tempting to criticize the professor or mock the assignment prompt in order to gain a rapport with the client, but it is inappropriate and does not model good scholastic behavior for the client. Second, speaking badly of the professor limits his or her credibility in the eyes of the client and will, in turn, lessen the effort that client will put into that assignment, which does not benefit the client and is counterproductive to the UWC's goals.

Fellow Consultants

As it was mentioned in the introduction, you all have some special qualities in common with each other, or you would not be here including a love of writing and the comprehension of how important it is to success in college, as well as desire to help others and the understanding and compassion it takes to do so. Because of these similarities, we hope that you all will be able to get along with each other and that some of you may develop friendships. However, all we
ask is that you be courteous, respectful, and kind to your fellow consultants. If there are any disagreements among you, please see Gail or Jodie to discuss it.

Senior Staff

Even though Jodie, tech specialist, and Gail, director, have different positions within the UWC, we are the senior staff, and as such, we collaborate on decisions regarding UWC operations—this responsibility includes scheduling walk-in sessions when you have cancellations and occasionally stepping into your sessions. We are not trying to overwork you or undermine your authority though.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to come to us with any questions at any time. We are nice, we care, and chances are at least one of us has been there.
**Mentorship Program**

**Mentoring and Being Mentored**

Each new tutor will be assigned a mentor, or an experienced tutor. This person will be the one you can ask questions, vent to, and/or tap for resources throughout the semester. In reality, we are all available for assistance, and you should never hesitate to ask us, but if you would like a go-to person who is familiar with your strengths and weaknesses as a tutor, then your mentor will be there.

New tutors will meet with their mentors on a weekly basis the first semester. Mentors and new tutors will need to go through the following mentorship agreement together, sign it, and return a copy to Gail. Initially, a new tutor will watch sessions performed by the mentor and other UWC consultants, and then he or she will be observed conducting a session. After completing training and all observations, if the mentor feels the new tutor is ready to starting conducting sessions on his or her own, he or she shall be “loosed upon the public at large.”

For examples of the mentorship agreement and observation forms, please see Appendices.
Employee Performance

Observation/NIU work performance

At some point during the course of the semester, you will be observed by Jodie or Gail. Observations are not meant to be scary or threatening; it is simply the best way to accomplish three things:

• to see how effective our training is,
• to see if there are areas we need to discuss with you personally, and
• to see if the level of tutoring is fairly consistent from tutor to tutor.

Policy Violation

On the rare occasion that a UWC policy is violated by an employee, a formal written report will be drafted. After three written violations, the employee will be terminated.

For an example of the policy violation form, please see the Appendices.
General Personnel Information

Payroll
NIU university employees are paid bimonthly on a two-week delay. Pay periods are from the 1st of the month to the 15th and from the 16th to the end of the month; paydays are on the 15th and the last working day of the month. Because of the delay, income earned in the first pay period of, for example, September is paid on the second payday (i.e. September 30th), and income earned in the second pay period of September is paid on the first payday of the next month (i.e. October 15th). If either payday falls on a weekend or holiday, you will receive payment on the closest business day before it. For example, if in October the 31st falls on a Sunday, you would be paid on Friday the 29th.

If you are paid hourly (i.e. you are peer tutor, extra help, or a student receptionist), make sure you write in your hours on the timesheet. Every two weeks, either Jodie or Gail will have an official timesheet for the university printed off that you will need to check for accuracy and then sign.

Mailboxes
Each tutor has a personalized mail pouch; graduate students can find theirs on the grad office door, while undergraduates can find theirs kitchen door, both arranged alphabetically by last name. Please check them frequently as that is where you will find your payroll information and, of course, unbelievably important memos.

Kitchen Use
CLEANUP
Feel free to use what you need to in the kitchen, but please clean up after yourself. That means doing your own dishes, wiping up spills on the counter or in the microwave, and turning off the oven and coffeemaker when you are finished using them. Do not let your food sit in the refrigerator until it spoils and makes the entire refrigerator smell bad. Also, do not rinse any food down the sink. The garbage disposal does not work, so the sink will back up, which is not a pretty sight and not worth the plumbers rolling their eyes at our inability to follow directions.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES
Any miscellaneous food on the shelves is for all to share. If you would like to make coffee, we have a coffeemaker and assorted leftover creamer and sugar, but you will need to bring your own grounds.

Pop and water are 50 cents each; there is a money jar (i.e. a coffee mug) in the kitchen to put your money in. So that everyone can continue to enjoy this privilege, please do not help yourself to a beverage unless you have the money
to pay for it that day. It is easy to forget to bring money in the next day, and if the money jar is short, whoever is picking up drinks and snacks will have to pay some money out of pocket.

**Voicing Concerns**

If at any point you have a problem of any kind, either with a coworker or a client, you should contact Gail or Jodie immediately. Our door is always open. We take your concerns seriously and want to do what we can do to ensure a positive, friendly, and professional workplace.
Personnel Policies

Scheduling

- Design a schedule that will be consistent all semester. If you need to change, it is not as problematic with the electronic system, but you may already have appointments scheduled. Shifting appointments is not always as easy as it might seem.
- Set your schedule so that you can arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of your shift to allow time to settle in and get ready to begin.

Time-off/Calling in Sick

- If you need to take a day(s) off, call to let Jodie or Gail know when as soon as possible. We will be happy to block out your times and shift appointments if possible.
- If you are going to be late, call so we can make adjustments or let the client know you are on your way.
- If you are sick, call us to let us know about how long you think you will be out. Please do not just email us that you are not coming in.
  - **Important:** As much as you may want to come in when you are sick, please stay home, especially if you are contagious. While it is difficult to shift appointments, we do not want to make our clients sick, so it is better for you to stay home and recuperate.

Leaving Work Early

- If you finish early, do not leave without first asking if there is anything you can do (e.g. take a walk-in appointment, help with filing, cover reception, etc.). Chances are good that we will let you leave early, but do not just disappear.
- Make sure your time card reflects the time you actually leave to the closest quarter hour unless Gail or Jodie tells you otherwise.
Contact Information

HOURS
Generally, we are open Monday through Thursday, excluding school holidays and breaks, from 8:00am to 5:00pm at Stevenson South and from 5:30pm to 8:30pm at Founders 302.

PHONE NUMBERS
Our phone number at Stevenson South is (815) 752-6636, and our phone number at Founders 302 is (815) 752-6630.

LOCATION
Our main center is in Stevenson South, B Tower, Lower Level, and our satellite center is in Founders Memorial Library, room 302.

WEB ADDRESS
Our web address is http://www.uwc.niu.edu.

Special Projects

SERVICE PRESENTATIONS
Occasionally, Jodie or Gail will ask you to give a presentation promoting the UWC to a class here at NIU (e.g. UNIV 101, ENGL 103). You will want to hand out brochures; explain what the UWC is all about including what services we offer, where we are located, and how to contact us; and then ask if anyone has any questions. If you love the UWC and think you can confidently speak of its virtues in front of a large group, please see Gail or Jodie to volunteer.

SEMINARS
Periodically throughout the course of the semester, we will give seminars about topics that are of frequent interest to our clients: for example, how to write resumes/cover letters, how to write a statement of purpose, what belongs in a personal statement, or what an APA paper should look like. If you have any presentation suggestions or if you have special knowledge of a particular topic and you are interested in sharing that knowledge, please see Gail or Jodie.

HANDOUTS
It is helpful to have a collection of handouts to share with the staff and the clients, so from time to time, you will be asked or you could volunteer, to develop information that explains some facet of writing in a particular genre/discipline or that gives tips on how to navigate components of the writing process, for example.

**UWC Resources**

**Computers**
The computers in the UWC are for you to use with your clients, but you are of course free to use them during a breathe as long as no client is waiting for one. We do ask, however, that if you are on the internet, please use common sense as far as the content of the websites you are visiting.

Do not download materials to these computers unless you are working with an emailed document. In this case, if you just save the document without designating a specific place for saving it, it will save as a template and be extremely difficult to retrieve, even if you have revised or edited it. When you are opening an emailed document, save it to the desktop or to the student folder (if there is one on the desktop), work on the document, and then minimize it while resending it in an email. Once it is successfully sent, close the document, and drag it to the trash.

**Printers**
We do not have printers for client or tutor use. There is a 24-hour computer lab on the other side of the stairs. To print in the computer lab, clients will need to have an NIU OneCard to swipe before retrieving the printed documents.

  * **Note:** We do not have any control over the computer lab—including the printers. On rare occasions, we have gone over to help a client figure out a problem, but it is very rare.

**Copiers**
We do not have a budget to make copies of consultants' or clients' papers or other non-UWC documents. However, if you want to make copies of a handout to give to the client, you may.
Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

LOCATION, HOURS, & CONTACT INFORMATION:

1. Where are you located? Our main center is in Stevenson South, B Tower, Lower Level, and our satellite center is in Founders Memorial Library, room 302.

2. When are you open? Generally, we are open Monday through Thursday, excluding school holidays and breaks, from 8:00am to 5:00pm at Stevenson South and from 5:30pm to 8:30pm at Founders 302. However, tutor availability can vary by semester, so please contact us to ensure our operating hours have not changed.

3. How can I contact you? Our phone number at Stevenson South is (815) 752-6636, and our phone number at Founders 302 is (815) 752-6630. You can also visit us at either location.

4. Do you have a website? Yes. Our web address is http://www.uwc.niu.edu. You can find information about our services, directions to the UWC, useful grammar handouts, and links to other helpful internet resources there.

ABOUT OUR SERVICES:

5. How much does it cost? Nothing. We provide our services free of charge.

6. Do I need to be an NIU student? Anyone affiliated with the university can use the UWC including students, alumni, faculty, and staff. However, we occasionally make exceptions for members of the community, so please contact us if you feel you have special circumstances.

7. How long does a session take? Typically, we can work through 2-3 pages in a 25 minute appointment and 4-6 pages in a 50 minute appointment, but it depends on the paper. If you have more than 7 pages, you should consider making multiple appointments, or, if you are a graduate student, you can request a 90 minute appointment if it is okay with their tutor. We suggest, especially for first time clients, that you schedule a 50 minute appointment; it is better to finish early than to run out of time. After your session, you and the tutor should be able to gauge how long follow-up sessions should be.

8. What do I need to bring to a session? You should bring two copies of your paper and any rubrics or assignment prompts. If you would prefer to make corrections on your laptop, you will need to bring one print copy of your paper as well. Additionally, you should come prepared with the name of the professor and the course number (e.g. ENGL 104, ECON 492, TLSE 240) for the class you are working on.

We ask that you bring two copies of your paper so that you can take notes on one copy and the tutor can do so on the other. We only offer client-guided sessions where you actively participate in the revision of your paper, which means that you are responsible for writing down any suggestions the tutor makes. Tutors can help you become a better writer by demonstrating useful writing skills, but they cannot fix your paper for you. To do so would minimize your claim to sole authorship and borders on plagiarism, which is in violation of NIU’s policy regarding academic integrity: “Students are considered to have cheated if they [. . ] turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else” (Northern Illinois University, 2011; emphasis added). For this reason, tutors need to keep any notes they take; once a tutor writes on a copy of your paper, the UWC will need to keep it.

Plagiarism is a serious offense that we take precautions not to facilitate. For more information, please visit our website or check out NIU's policy at http://catalog.niu.edu/content.php?coid=16&navoid=476&returnto=search

PARKING & DIRECTIONS:

9. I have a parking permit—where can I park? For Stevenson South, there is parking for yellow, blue, and brown permits on Stadium Dr. West next to the baseball field; orange and blue permits can park in the lots west of Stevenson. There are also some pay spots in front of the Recreation Center at the corner of Lucinda Ave. and Annie Glidden Rd.
For Founders Memorial, there is parking for blue and yellow permits in the NIU Parking Deck on Normal Rd.; blue permits can park in the small lot behind the library, and after 4:00pm, yellow permits can park there as well. There is also a visitor pay lot on Carroll Ave. to west of the library.

10. **I do not have a parking permit—where can I park?** There is no permit-free parking near either center. We suggest parking in the visitor pay lot on Carroll Ave. (to the west of the library) and taking the Circle Left bus from the Student Center if you need to go to Stevenson South.

11. **Which bus should I take to get to Stevenson South the fastest?** If you are coming from the Student Center or DuSable, take the Circle Left. To see how close a bus is to you, you can visit the Huskie Bus Tracker at http://huskietracks.niu.edu/DynamicDefault.asp. For more information about how the Huskie Bus Line works, you can visit its website at http://www.niu.edu/commontrad/transportation/index.shtml.

**SKYPE SESSIONS:**

12. **Who can schedule Skype sessions?** We only offer Skype sessions to clients who do not live on campus or in the DeKalb/Sycamore area. We also cannot tutor the core competency English courses (i.e. ENGL 102, 103, 104, and 105).

13. **How can I make appointments for Skype sessions?** To set up a Skype session, you should call us at (815) 752-6636 and ask for our tech specialist, Jodie Butler.

14. **What should I expect with Skype sessions?**
   - The first step is to schedule a face-to-face meeting with Ms. Butler and the tutor you will work with. At this appointment, which must be at least 50 minutes, Ms. Butler will go over how to use Skype and help you set up the program.
   - The second step is to schedule any Skype appointments you need. We only offer Skype sessions that are at least 50 minutes long, but after your initial appointment, you can schedule 90 minute appointments if you are graduate student and it is okay with your tutor.
   - The third step is to submit your assignment electronically at least 24 hours before your appointment. This measure allows Ms. Butler to set up everything your tutor will need for your Skype session; it does not mean that the tutor will have read your paper ahead of time.
   - The fourth and final step is to meet your tutor on Skype to work on your assignment.

**OTHER WRITING CENTERS:**

15. **Is this the Writers' Workshop?** No. The Writers' Workshop is located in DuSable, room 261, and it is only available to students enrolled in the CHANCE Program. Their number is 815-753-0272, and their website is http://www.engl.niu.edu/comskills/.

16. **Is there another writing center on campus?** No. We are the only general population writing center on campus. However, in addition to the Writer's Workshop for CHANCE students, there is the ESL (English as a Second Language) Center located in Reavis, room 306b. You can contact them by phone at (815) 753-6637 or by email at niu.eslcenter@gmail.com, and their website is http://www.engl.niu.edu/esll.

**COMPUTER LAB ASSISTANCE:**

17. **I am over in the computer lab, and the computers/printers are not working. Can you help?** No. The computer lab is separate from the UWC. Instead, you should contact ITS if you are having problems with lab equipment. Their number is (815) 753-8100.

18. **Do you have printer I could use to print off my paper?** No. However, there is a computer lab across from Stevenson South on the other side of the stairs, as well as a lab on the third floor of the library a few doors down from Founders 302. Check out the ITS website for information about each lab's hours: http://www.niu.edu/its/labs/

**Rules and Restrictions**
MAKING APPOINTMENTS:

19. I am a graduate student—can I request to work with a graduate student or faculty member? Yes, but we cannot guarantee you will always be assigned one. Whenever possible, we try to accommodate client requests to work with a particular tutor. We assure you that all our tutors are intelligent and well trained, and we will not assign you a tutor that does not have adequate experience or that is uncomfortable working on graduate assignments.

20. How do I schedule a session with a senior staff member? Both Gail Jacky, director, and Jodie Butler, tech specialist, keep their own schedules apart from the system used for tutors’ appointments, so you should contact them directly. To contact Ms. Jacky, you should email her at gjacky@niu.edu. To contact Ms. Butler, you should call us at (815) 752-6636 and ask for her.

21. If there are no available appointments, can you call me if there is a cancellation? No. It would be too chaotic to try to keep track of who called when and for what. You need to schedule any sessions you need ahead of time, especially if it is toward the end of the semester (or if you know all of your classmates are required to come in) because we will be busy. We recommend that you make an appointment at least two weeks in advance of when you would like to come in, giving yourself enough time before the due date to make any corrections.

TYPES OF SESSIONS:

22. I only have a few quick questions—can I get a 5 or 10 minute appointment? No. You will need to schedule at least a 25 minute appointment. However, if we finish early, you are certainly free to leave.

23. Can you answer a quick question over the phone? No. We have a policy against tying up the phone line to answer session-related questions.

24. Can I do a session over the phone? No. Again, we have a policy against tying up the phone line to answer session-related questions.

25. Can I drop off my paper and pick it up later? No. We only offer client-guided sessions where you actively participate in the revision of your paper. Tutors will also help you become a better writer by demonstrating useful writing skills, applicable beyond the current assignment, but they cannot fix your paper for you. To do so would minimize your claim to sole authorship and borders on plagiarism, which is in violation of NIU’s policy regarding academic integrity: “Students are considered to have cheated if they [...] turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else” (Northern Illinois University, 2011; emphasis added).

26. If you are closed, can I meet with a consultant outside of the UWC? No. If you want to schedule an appointment with a UWC consultant, you need to come in during our regular hours.

27. Can I bring in a take-home exam? Yes, but your tutor can only look at grammar and mechanics; we cannot offer suggestions about content, organization, clarity, etc. If the tutor sees a pervasive issue with formatting or citations, he or she can identify it for you (e.g. “Your reference page is formatted incorrectly.”), but he or she cannot tell you how to fix it. Since exams are a direct reflection of what you have learned, to offer more assistance than this would be a form of plagiarism. For more information about the university’s policy on plagiarism, see FAQs #8 and #25.

TYPES OF CLIENTS:

28. Can I bring in a paper for a friend? No. The writer must be present to go through his or her paper; otherwise, it is a form of plagiarism: if you write down the tutor’s suggestions for your friend and he or she uses them, then he or she is taking the tutor’s and/or your ideas and presenting them as his or her own. For more information about the university’s policy on plagiarism, see FAQs #8 and #25.

29. I am a part of group, and we need to make an appointment, but the other group members do not have time to come in—can I bring in the paper for a session by myself? No. All of the writers must be present; otherwise, it is a form of plagiarism. See FAQ #28 for an explanation. For more information about the university’s policy on plagiarism, see FAQs #8 and #25.
OBTAINING PROOF OF VISIT (FEEDBACK FORMS):

30. Will you sign this sheet my professor gave me to prove I was here? No, however, we will provide you with a copy of the feedback form, which has all the relevant information from the visit. The form is also dated and stamped, so your professor will know exactly when you came in and what happened during the session.

31. I cannot get an appointment, so can I pick up a feedback form because my professor requires that we come in? No. If your professor requires you to use our services, the expectation is that you will come in and actively participate in a session, which is what our feedback form guarantees. Giving you a feedback form when you have not met those expectations is unethical on our part because we would be helping you cheat.

Reference
**Organization of Elements in Revision One**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After Deleting Unnecessary Sections</th>
<th>After Recombining, Chunking, and Rearranging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Introduction</strong></td>
<td><strong>I. Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. What That Means</td>
<td>A. Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. What It Does Not Mean</td>
<td>B. UWC Purpose &amp; Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Who Uses the Center?</strong></td>
<td>1. What UWC Will Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. ELL</td>
<td>2. What UWC Will Not Do</td>
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<td>B. LD</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Groups</td>
<td><strong>II. Tutoring Information</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>III. Tutoring: What to Do</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Schedule/Time-Off</td>
<td>A. Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Arriving at the UWC</td>
<td>1. Before Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Being Here</td>
<td>a. Arriving/Checking Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Beginning the Session</td>
<td>b. Down Time/Being Here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Assessing a Client’s Needs</td>
<td>c. Beginning a Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Reading Aloud</td>
<td><strong>2. During Sessions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Goal Setting</td>
<td>a. Assessing Client’s Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Tutoring Skills</td>
<td>b. Reading Aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Keeping Track of Time</td>
<td>c. Goal Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Ending a Session</td>
<td>d. Keeping Track of Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. To Stamp or Not to Stamp</td>
<td><strong>3. After Sessions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Dealing with Scary Subject You are Unfamiliar With</td>
<td>a. Ending Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Not Doing a Session</td>
<td>b. Paperwork/Feedback Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Exams</td>
<td>c. Stamping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV. Tutoring Process (Tips from Ildikó Carrington)</strong></td>
<td><strong>B. Policies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V. Non-standard Sessions</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Walk-ins</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VI. Challenges</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. No-show &amp; Late Clients</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VII. Interpersonal Relations in the UWC</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. Not Doing Sessions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Clients and You</td>
<td><strong>4. Exams</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Teachers and You</td>
<td><strong>5. Groups</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Fellow Consultants</td>
<td><strong>C. Challenges</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Senior Staff</td>
<td><strong>1. Unfamiliar Subjects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2. Different Clients</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. ELL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A. General LVCC Information
   1. Where We are Located and How to Get Here
   2. Phone Numbers
   3. Contact Information
   4. Web Address
   5. Religious Claims
   6. Learning Disabilities

B. Personal Information
   1. Personal Information
   2. Exams
   3. Copies
   4. Photocopies
   5. Parking Permits
   6. Parking Pass
   7. Parking Pass
   8. Parking Pass

C. Employment Performance
   1. Memoire and Being Memored
   2. Memoireship Program
   3. Mentor Ship
   4. Mentor Ship

D. General Policies
   1. Pressure
   2. Fellow Consellants
   3. Professor
   4. Chair

E. Personal Policies
   1. Obeservation
   2. Opinion/Influence Work Performance
   3. Kitchen Use
   4. Mailboxes

F. Teaching
   1. Learning Work
   2. Time Off/Calling in Sick
   3. Calling in Sick/Emergencies/Continuing Leave
   4. Leave Work
   5. Leave Early
   6. Work Schedule

G. Concerns
   1. Checking Your Schedule

H. Miscellany
   1. Special Projects
   2. Web Address
   3. Location

IX. Employee Performance Documents
X. Miscellany

IV. Miscellaneous

III. Employment Information

II. Training Process (TikTok)
B. Sample Employee Performance Documents
   1. Short
   2. Long

A. Sample Feedback Forms

V. Appendices
   1. Computers
   2. Printers
   3. Copiers

C. UWRC Resources
   1. Handouts
   2. Seminars

I. Service Presentations
Style Guide: Formatting

1. Heading Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level One</strong></td>
<td>Bodoni MT Black 14, centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level Two</strong></td>
<td>Bodoni MT 12, bold + full underline, left aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL THREE</strong></td>
<td>Bodoni MT 11, small caps, left aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level Four.</strong></td>
<td>Bodoni MT 11, italicized, end with period, in line with text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Text Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is an example of the body text.</td>
<td>Arial Narrow 11, left aligned, 1.5 spacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is an example of bulleted list spacing:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• list point</td>
<td>Diamond bullet, indented .25” from left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• list point</td>
<td>Small oblong bullet, indented .75” from left</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important:** This point requires emphasis.

**Note:** I have something extra to say here.

"The source says something I want to emphasize." Emphasis within a quote is italicized.

3. Folio Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Document Name</td>
<td>number: Bodoni MT Black 12, left aligned text: Arial Narrow 11, 5 spaces from number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Name 4</td>
<td>number: Bodoni MT Black 12, right aligned text: Arial Narrow 11, 5 spaces from number</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Bulleted/Numbered List Punctuation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When introductory sentence is an independent clause, follow it with a colon:</td>
<td>Use colons after independent clauses, but -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introductory sentences includes</th>
<th>do not use colons after sentences that require list items to become independent clauses.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• list point</td>
<td>When list items are words or phrases, do not capitalize items or use any punctuation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• list point</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• list point</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| • List point sentence.        | When list items are independent clauses, capitalize the first word of each sentence and end each item with a period. |
| • List point sentence.        |                                 |
| • List point sentence.        |                                 |

| • list point,                 | When list items (phrases or independent sentences) are meant to read as a sentence, use commas to separate items, add *and* before the final item, and end list with a period. |
| • list point, and             |                                 |
| • list point                  |                                 |
### Style Guide: Grammar, Mechanics, Consistency

1. **Spelling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Edit</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>him/her</td>
<td>him or her</td>
<td>More professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s/he</td>
<td>he or she</td>
<td>Maintain consistency with object pronouns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Word Choice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Edit</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>professor</td>
<td>Less likely to offend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultant</td>
<td>tutor</td>
<td>More commonly used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Box</td>
<td>inbox</td>
<td>Reflects more current spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assignment, paper, work</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>More inclusive to reflect all the types of client product we see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appointment, session</td>
<td>session</td>
<td>Focuses more on the tutoring, not the scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>center</td>
<td>UWC</td>
<td>More official</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>