Peer Tutoring in a Multicultural Environment: Developing the Skills, Considering the Issues

SWC 300.001  Winter, 2007
TuTh 1-2:30  G444C Mason Hall
Fulfills the Advanced Writing in the Disciplines (AWD) Requirement
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Office hours: By appointment

Required Texts: (available at Shaman Drum)
* Coursepack (available at MBS)

Goals
This seminar aims to help you become theoretically informed and practiced peer tutors of students who come from diverse cultures, language backgrounds, life experiences and political persuasions, and who want to succeed at writing for a variety of audiences and purposes. In the process, you will learn much about your own writing. You will also become more adept at electronic literate practices. Your learning experiences will take many forms, including these activities:

* reading and critiquing ideas about teaching
* learning and reflecting on cultural and personal differences in communication style
* examining student papers together in class
* writing extensively, from short explorations to longer, polished papers
* workshopping each other’s papers
* conferencing with me
* observing ECB 301 tutors at work
* observing SWC faculty conferencing with students in writing workshop
* sharing (on-line and off) your own experiences as writers and tutors
* observing and reflecting on your own tutoring style

You’ll notice that most of these activities are grounded in hands-on experience. This course will provide you with many opportunities to learn by doing, by serving others, and by trying out theories of teaching and learning with the ultimate goal of defining your own tutoring style and putting it into practice.

Writing Assignments: All are double spaced, typed, and carefully edited.
Four reading logs
Five 2-3 page write-ups of observations
Four 3-page write-ups of your face-to-face practice sessions
Two practice OWL sessions
Two major papers in at least two drafts
One 2-3 page reflective essay that introduces your portfolio

To keep your assignments organized for your final portfolio, I’d like you to get a loose-leaf notebook with separators and label them: READING LOGS; OBSERVATIONS; F2F PRACTICE; OWL PRACTICE; and MAJOR PAPERS. All drafts of all your papers should appear in your final portfolio, due on the last day of class.

1. Reading logs. Here you will record your thoughts and insights about four of the reading assignments (to be announced). While these journal entries do not need to be organized as tightly as an academic paper, they should be intelligent, provocative (or otherwise “deep”), and written with the reader (me) in mind. This assignment gives you the chance to respond to the authors with “Yes, but...” complicating the author’s position in order to discover and clarify your own. In addition, I’d like you to pose some provocative questions for class discussion -- questions you’d really like to engage with, yourself. When you are assigned a reading log you will post it on the “Course Tools” network so that everyone can read what you have to say.

2. Observations (2-3 page write-ups of five conferences). You will start your observations of trained tutors and SWC faculty in the third week. Take notes during each session you observe, and from these notes write a description of what went on in each session, how students and tutors interacted, what techniques the tutors were using, what you thought of those techniques, and so on. The purpose of this writing is to focus your mind on the minute details of the tutor-tutee relationship. Look for body language, who is in control of the session and in what ways, what is being communicated and absorbed; look for feelings, expressed and unexpressed, and abstract things like openness, interest, understanding. Be sure to ANALYZE these observations: say what you think they mean and why you think so, referring to the readings, if applicable, and using your own best judgment. It is very important to write in depth about each of these sessions and edit carefully.

3. F2F Practice (2-3 page write-ups of four conferences). In the sixth week of the course you will start your face-to-face practice with students who come to the peer tutoring center for help. By then you will have some practical experience in class and some theoretical experience from the readings, discussions and observations. Immediately after each F2F practice session (or ASAP) write down everything you can remember about what happened during the session. Analyze and evaluate the session from the point of view of both you and the tutee. To do the latter, try to recall body language, emotions, evidence of understanding, and so on, just as you did in your observations of other tutors at work.

4. OWL Practice. Near the end of the semester you will start learning how to give feedback on-line. After some in-class practice, you will work on two papers recently "owled" by experienced tutors. Your responses should be sent to me.
when you have finished your comments (keep a copy just in case!). I will write my own detailed comments on your style and accuracy for each one. Include the OWL papers with my comments in your final portfolio.

5. Major Papers
A scheduled conference with me is required during the writing of each of these papers. You may have more conferences if you like; my office hours are by appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Paper #1 Auto-ethnography  Write an essay of about 6 pages (in two or more drafts) with your peers as your audience. This essay describes your development as a writer in some interesting, unusual way. How did you learn to write? What life experiences, situations, teachers, authors, and/or ideas influenced your style and preferred subject matter? What goes on in your head as you write? How does your body feel? What blocks you? How do you get past your stuck point? What skills are you working on in your writing right now? How are you approaching those? Questions like these should help you get started, but don’t feel constrained by them. Tackle the subject seriously, but be creative. This is not your standard academic paper!

Paper #2 Research paper: Issue in language, writing, or peer tutoring  Find out more about an issue we have read about or discussed in class (or one that you’re especially interested in) by looking at research that helps answer the questions you pose. Your 10-12 page paper will 1) situate the questions that interest you 2) situate the issue in context (why is it important or interesting?) 3) tell readers how the sources you’ve found help answer your questions, and 4) connect what you’ve found with the real world in some way. Your bibliography should include at least 10 sources and be cited correctly in APA or MLA style. You will write a prospectus and have it okay’d by me before you go ahead with your first draft. As with paper #1, you will do at least two drafts of this paper, with plenty of opportunity to discuss it with me in conference.

Grading:
Observations and Practice Session Write-ups:
++  Excellent work -- meets my (high) standards.
+   Okay but not inspired work. You can rewrite if you choose to, but it's not required.
RW  Mandatory rewrite; see me in conference for details if they're not evident from my written comments or if you just want to talk about writing.

Longer papers: Your longer papers will not be graded; I feel that grades often stifle the critical thinking, creativity, and risk-taking that are necessary to the writing process. You’ll receive plenty of feedback, both from me and from your peers, and you may rewrite as many times as you like.

My Expectations
* Think deeply about the issues brought up in the course and let that thinking be reflected in your writing
*Revise your papers liberally, responding to feedback and your own new ideas
*Edit your final drafts as if you were writing professionally
*Participate enthusiastically and knowledgeably in class discussion
*Come to class faithfully. If you can’t be there, please let me know by e-mail if possible. More than two absences (except for religious holidays) will affect your final grade.
*Show respect for other writers through your language, your attitudes, and your interest in what they have to say and who they are as people.

If you are unsure about how you are doing at any time during the course, please ask me about it in conference. You will have endless opportunities to write and revise your papers during the course, and any number of individual conferences with me as you want and need them. I’m here for you!

Calendar
Thurs. Jan. 4  Introduction to the course and to each other
Tues. Jan 9  Writers on Writing; the writing process
Thurs. Jan 11  Introduction to issues in peer tutoring
Tues. Jan 16  Issues in Tutoring
Thurs. Jan. 18  Issues in tutoring. Practice papers
  Start observations of tutors and SWC faculty
Thurs. Jan. 25  Practice papers, observations
Tues. Jan. 30  First draft of Auto-ethnography due. Peer feedback
Thurs. Feb. 1  Language and Authority
Tues. Feb. 6  Language and Authority, continued
Thurs. Feb. 8  Second Draft of Auto-ethnography due. Peer feedback
Tues. Feb. 13  Argument/Practice papers
Thurs. Feb. 15  Introduction to research paper. Writing a prospectus.
  Start reading "Listening to the World" on line
Tues. Feb. 20  What is "good writing"? Writing Across the Curriculum.
  Start F2F practice sessions
  Winter Recess
Tues. Mar. 6  ESL Writers
Thurs. Mar. 8  ESL Writers
Tues. Mar. 13  OWL technique
Thurs. Mar. 15  OWL Practice
Tues. Mar. 20  ESL OWL Practice
Thurs. Mar. 22  NO CLASS. I WILL BE AT A CONFERENCE.
Tues. Mar. 27  Grammar
Thurs. Mar. 29  Grammar
Tues. Apr. 3  First draft of Research Paper due. Peer feedback
Thurs. Apr. 5  Plagiarism: How to explain it, how to detect it.
Tues. Apr. 10  Research Reports. Second draft of Research Paper due.
Thurs. Apr. 12  Research Reports (continued)
Tues. Apr. 17  "What I’ve learned and how I will apply it." Portfolios Due.

Articles in course pack in order:
Writers on Writing
Sara Paretsky
Alice Hoffman
Andre Aciman
Anne Lamott ("Polaroids")

Elbow: The Voyage Out
Murphy and Sherwood: The Tutoring Process. (from "St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors")
Clark: Coach or Dictator?
Gillespie and Lerner: The Tutoring Process (from "Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring")
Clark: Getting Started
Clark: Down to Business
Harris: Talk to Me
Murphy and Sherwood: (from "St. Martin’s Sourcebook for Writing Tutors")
Sherwood: Humor and the Serious Tutor
Brooks: Minimalist Tutoring: Making the Student Do All the Work
Gillespie and Lerner: Observing in the Writing Center (from "Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring")
Lamott: Introduction: (from "Bird by Bird")
LSA: Resolution on Ebonics
CCCC Statement: Students' Right to their own Language
Smitherman: (from: "Talkin and Testifyin")
From Africa to the New World
It Bees Dat Way Sometime
Grimm: Toward a Fair Writing Center Practice (from "Good Intentions").
Barron: Afterword (from Grimm: "Good Intentions")
Lunsford: Everything’s An Argument
Thaiss and Zawacki: Questioning Alternative Discourses (from "ALT DIS")
Hawthorne: Student Perceptions of the Value of WAC
NCTE English Language Learners Key Terms
CCCC Statement on Second-Language Writing and Writers
Leki: Sentence-level errors
Leki: Responding to ESL Writing
Harris, Silva: Tutoring ESL Students
Cooper, Bui, Riker: Protocols and Process in Online Tutoring
Clark: Collaboration and Ethics in Writing Center Pedagogy (from "St. Martin's Guide")
UM Department of English: Plagiarism
Plagiarism: What it is and how to recognize it and avoid it
Schroeder, Bizzell, Fox: from "ALT DIS":
   Bizzell: Preface
   Bizzell: The Intellectual Work of "Mixed" Forms of Academic Discourse
   Kynard: New Life in this Dormant Creature
   Kremer: So It Was This Beautiful Night
Grimm: Locating Authority

Papers for discussion:
   Life as I have seen it
Her heart is full of unexplained sorrow
Commercials are full of s--t!
Decreasing violence
Should the United States completely abolish the death penalty?
Langston Hughes
Can we execute mandatory repatriation on the Vietnamese boatpeople?
Your perfect little world
The evolution of a young woman
Functioning dysfunction
What my lips have kissed and where and why
Libraries, information, and knowledge
Women's rights
Injustice in college town
The evil dead
More to go around
Concepts of home
Government should tighten the regulation system on television shows