

# Make the Most of Your Tutoring Session

No. 45 in the Writing Center Handout Series

*Like most busy students, you want to get the most out of your time. Whether it's your first or hundredth meeting with a tutor, you will want to walk away feeling like you learned something worthwhile. During the conference, the tutor shares her knowledge of the writing process and you share your knowledge of the subject you are writing about. Since you play such an important role in the conference, you have a lot of control over its success. Here are a few tips to help you maximize the potential of your writing center conference.*

## **Find a good time to come.**

Consult your jam-packed calendar and plan to meet with a tutor several days before your assignment is due. Although you can walk in whenever a tutor is available, an appointment will ensure that you get a slot. Here's some good news: many chronic procrastinators feel motivated to begin their assignment before coming to their writing center conference—this could be you! Making an appointment before the last minute will allow you ample time for revision after the conference and before your due date. Finally, arrive on time for your session and cancel if you cannot make it. You can cancel by

by

stopping by the center to take your name off the appointment calendar.

## **Bring all your work.**

Whether you have a few scribbled ideas or a completed draft, bring all your work to the tutoring session. Arrive early if you need to print in order to maximize your time with the tutor. If you can, bring a copy of the assignment and your syllabus so the tutor can better understand your professor's expectations. Scrap paper and a pen to jot down your ideas will also be invaluable during the session.

## **Have a goal in mind.**

What aspects of the assignment are you struggling with? Are there specific challenges you usually face in writing? What do you want to improve about your paper? Ask yourself these questions before you come and don't hesitate to tell the tutor what you hope to get out of the session. Feel free to say, "I really need help developing an argument" or anything else you can think of.

## **Relax. Breathe.**

Writing can be a stressful experience but your writing conference shouldn't be. Tutors are students just like you who struggle with similar writing assignments. No one is immune to writer's block! Self-conscious writers can put their minds at ease because every session is completely confidential. Nothing you discuss with the tutor will be shared with your professor or classmates.

## **Know what to expect.**

Working with a tutor can help you improve aspects of your current paper while also fostering skills to help you become a better writer in the future. The tutor wants to help you express your ideas effectively through writing. You can expect her to consider ideas and content before she considers structure, style, and grammar. She will ask you questions—but nothing too scary. You can ask her questions—as scary as you like. Even perfectionists should try to focus on just one or two issues in their writing during the conference. You and your tutor will create a plan so you know exactly what to do with the writing assignment once you leave the session.

## **Make more than one appointment.**

The more the merrier, they say! Feel free to return to the center at multiple stages of your writing process. Of course, you already know that the more time you spend on your assignment, the better it will be.

*"How do I know what I think until I see what I say?" -E.M. Forster*



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