The Writing Center is in full swing. During our first two weeks, tutors met with over 200 individual students (in over 250 sessions) from fifteen different academic departments, including Early Childhood Education, Accounting, Math, and Journalism, as well as English, History, and Philosophy.

At the start of a new academic year, tutors often meet with students who have never utilized tutoring before. These students are quick to identify tutoring as an effective resource that they enjoy:

• “The tutor] helped me develop the thesis statement, and listened [to] my questions carefully.”
• “She made me do work by myself...and helped me organize my essay as well.”
• Many students conclude that “tutors have been one of the most helpful tools. Please continue this style of student help.”

Instructors are encouraged to schedule a WCenter Orientation, either in their classrooms, or in the WCenter where students can become more familiar with the space and faces here. Visiting the WCenter can make meeting with a tutor for the first time more comfortable.

Instructors can also create a brief writing assignment or Directed Learning Activity (DLA) that requires students to schedule an appointment and meet with a tutor. Short, informal writing assignments help students prepare for, and participate in, an initial tutoring session. We especially encourage instructors to schedule Orientations if they are requiring students to see WCenter tutors as part of their assignments.

Visit the CLRC WCenter website to complete the Orientation Request Form: http://www.sbcc.edu/learningresources/website/WL/WCOutreach.htm.

We look forward to supporting SBCC instructors and students this year,

~ Nicole Biergiel, LTA
Lisa Danhi, LTA

Thanks to the efforts of the staff, tutors, and students working in the WCenter, we once again have remarkably encouraging statistical results for the past academic year (2007-08). These are quite similar to the stats from 2006-07, which was the first academic year of the “new and improved” Writing Center (thanks to funding from the Partnership for Student Success). That first year’s data were so rosy that they caused our beloved statistical expert Darla Cooper’s right eyebrow to rise. Those of you who’ve worked with her know “the look.”

Essentially, the data show that students who use the WCenter have on average a 17% higher success rate than their peers in all of their classes who don’t use the Writing Center. When we look at the performance of basic skills writing students relative to their peers in basic writing classes (ENG 65, 80, and 100), the results are even better, as they exhibit approximately a 20% higher success rate. Even a 2% margin is significant in such studies, so we are pleased with these results and looking forward, with your assistance, to another successful year.

If you have any questions about learning assistance, please email or give me a call at X2673.

~ Dr. Jerry Pike,
CLRC Director
TUTOR TALK

I’m thrilled to be returning as a tutor for the Writing Center this Fall. My education includes a B.A. in History from UCSB (’68), and a Master’s in English with an emphasis in poetry writing from Cal State Northridge (2000). I’ve been a professional writer and a teacher for over thirty years, but before that I worked as a secretary, publicist, and singer. As a teacher I’ve worked with all ages in composition, poetry, and fiction. As an author I wear many hats, having published everything from news articles to children’s fiction to poetry. I thrive on variety!

That’s probably why tutoring at SBCC suits me so well. Our students, who come from an rich array of backgrounds and life experiences, challenge and inspire me. I love watching a student move from dread to delight regarding a particular assignment. I am passionate about the writing process, and work to help students discover and develop their own strengths as writers. I want them to leave the Writing Center energized about their work.

All writers possess the ability to greatly improve their work. I look forward to helping SBCC students access their untapped abilities and make their writing shine!

~ Ellen Kelly, Writing Center Tutor

EDIT YOURSELF

☐ The film had a dynamic and excitement feeling to it. (word form)

☐ Once we were their, we felt a piece come over us. (homonyms)

As the examples above illustrate, making accurate and appropriate word choices is one challenge that both native and non-native writers of English face. These examples may seem obvious, but they are hard to spot in one’s own writing. Here are some strategies to improve and correct your own drafts. (see also our Word Form Handout)

While writing: When looking up words in a dictionary or thesaurus, be sure to read the entire entry before choosing a word. First, be sure the word fits the context and idea of your sentence. Then identify which word form (noun, adjective, adverb, etc) the sentence requires.

✔ Before tutoring: Read your paper aloud and underline all words or phrases that seem awkward or “guessed.” Look them up and make revisions as needed. Ask the tutor about words for which you need clarification.

✔ During and after tutoring: As you and the tutor read your paper, take notes about word choices. Be sure to follow up by repeating the two steps above as you revise your paper.

✔ Ongoing: Keep a language journal where you can record different word forms of new vocabulary, interesting words you find, and phrases that you learn.

INSTRUCTOR INQUIRIES

Q: Can my creative writing students bring their work into the Writing Center? With what types of writing do you assist students?

Our tutors act as professional reader responders who assist students in all stages of the writing process for a variety of styles, purposes, and disciplines, including creative writing. One main principle from which we work is that we tutor the student, not the paper; consequently, our focus supports the growth of the student as a writer, rather than correcting the paper.

Writing Center tutor Ellen Kelly describes her approach: “I’ve developed strategies, based on the concepts of permission and trust, that apply to both academic and creative writing. For example, when brainstorming, give yourself permission to write all ideas that occur to you, even if they seem ‘boring, wrong, or crazy.’ This practice creates plenty of raw material for your paper. When revising, trust your instinct, trust your voice as you read your writing aloud, and trust your ear to catch things that need adjustment.” See the “On the Pulse” column (page one) to learn how to schedule a Writing Center orientation and find out how we can assist your students.

Instructors may submit questions for this column to writingcenter@sbcc.edu.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WRITING SKILLS WORKSHOPS IN THE CLRC

- September 25, 1 – 1:50 PM: MLA and APA Citation
- October 23, 1 – 1:50 PM: Self Editing Strategies

LEARNING SKILLS WORKSHOPS IN THE CLRC

- October 2, 1 – 1:50 PM: Overcoming Procrastination
- October 16, 1 – 1:50 PM: Test Taking Skills

WRITING CENTER AVAILABILITY

- October 1: 1 – 2 PM WC Closed
- October 16: 6 – 7 PM WC Closed

CLRC WRITING CENTER AT SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE

721 Cliff Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
805-965-0581 x2663

General info and tutorial appointments

Nicole Biergiel, LTA
Lisa Danhi, LTA
805-965-0581 x2671

Employment opportunities

Come see us on campus or
Visit us on the Web:
http://www.sbcc.edu/

Online resources and more!