

The Campus Writer

A Publication of The Campus Writing Center

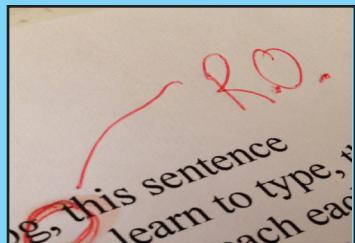
November 2017 • Vol. 1 No. 2

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Record Number of Students Visit CWC

Center expands services, connections across campus



By Christina Denny

Fall 2017 is on track to be the Campus Writing Center's busiest semester ever.

Over 2,000 students visited the CWC for tutoring at least once in the first five weeks of this semester--a 37 percent increase from last year. Individual tutoring sessions were up 92 percent from the first five weeks of fall 2016.

With additional students coming for various workshops and small group offerings, the CWC is demonstrably a vibrant hub for writing and reading support on campus.

"The CWC staff have been doing a tremendous job working with the increased number of students and providing an increasing variety of services. And I think that students and faculty see what we are doing and are responding to it," says Stefan Spezio, Director of the Campus Writing Center.

Class visits, when instructors schedule to bring a class for a one hour small group session, continue to be a vital introduction to CWC services. By mid-November, the center had hosted over 100 class visits.

John Pian, an LC STEM advisor and

CWC staff member, is pleased by the spike in class visits this semester. He believes more instructors are bringing students, or encouraging students to come on their own, because they see that the CWC "makes a real difference" in class writing.

Maya Grant is a tutor who also assists with weekly Conversation Hours and Reading Strategies groups. She has also seen a consistently strong turnout for those services this fall.

Her Reading Strategies sessions focus on different topics each week, such as main ideas or vocabulary. One week's topic -- poetry -- sparked a lot of student interest, Grant notes. She has found that poetry can be a daunting literary form for non-native speakers of English, but reviewing a short poem together "encouraged them to read literature outside of class" and opened the door to a lively broader discussion about academic life, she says.

As final exams approach, the CWC is even staying open late with a "Write Night 2017" event on Thursday, Dec. 7. The center will be open and staffed with tutors until 11 p.m., with free refreshments starting at 6 p.m.

CWC BY THE NUMBERS



In the first 5 weeks of the Fall 2017 semester:

2,056 Students came for tutoring at least one time.
(+ 37% from Fall 2016)

1,818 One-on-one tutoring sessions (+92% from Fall 2016)

69 Class visits (+35% from Fall 2016)

37 Number of tutors working
(+ 27% from Fall 2016)

--Joe Labozzetta

Professor Shares Speech Tips with Tutors

CAMPUS WRITING CENTER TO OFFER SPEECH PRACTICE SESSIONS

On Nov. 1, Prof. Franca Ferrari-Bridgers of the Speech Department gave a special multi-media training session for tutors. She shared the scoring rubric used when students in the required Speech Communication course (SP211) deliver their speeches in class.

The CWC plans to offer SP211 students appointments to meet with tutors and practice their speeches. With Ferrari-Bridgers' tips, tutors are now prepared to advise students on ways to improve body language, vocalization, and other aspects of speech performance.

Julius Baltonado, a CWC tutor who is also a poet and writing instructor, appreciated hearing Ferrari-Bridgers' suggested techniques that students can use for "presence on stage," such as controlled hand gestures. It was also valuable to learn more about how speech delivery is graded, he says.

"When we generally tutor students in speech, we focus on outline and timing," Baltonado notes. "With [Prof. Ferrari-Bridgers'] discussion, we now have better insight into what the professor is expecting" regarding presentation skills.

According to Stefan Spezio, director of the center, this added speech support was sparked by a student request.

"The idea to have Prof. Ferrari-Bridgers come speak to the CWC staff actually came from a student who was attending one of our conversation hours," Spezio says. "The student asked if we offered assistance with public speaking, which got me to thinking. Prof. Ferrari-Bridgers appeared in the CWC a few days later, and I asked her if she would be interested in speaking to our tutors and she said yes!"

Spezio states that "a number of writing centers across the country have begun moving in the direction of incorporating the tutoring of presentation or public speaking skills into their portfolio of services and referring to themselves as 'communication centers.'"

Supporting SP211 students beyond their written speech outlines, Spezio says, is thus a fitting move for the CWC: "I think trying to expand services to assist students in the realm of public speaking is really just closing the loop on helping students gain confidence and proficiency in their ability to communicate."

TUTORS WANTED!

The Campus Writing Center is now accepting applications for the spring semester. If you feel like your writing skills are stellar and you crushed your English 101 and 102 classes with an A- or better, then you can apply to share your gift as a CWC tutor. Our friendly staff helps students with papers for various subjects, scholarship applications, resumes, reading comprehension, and grammar.

You don't even need to be a QCC student to apply – many on staff are working on higher degrees, or already have BA's or MA's. Bonus: our writing consultants are paid for attending orientation sessions and weekly trainings each semester to expand their tutoring expertise. For a full job description, visit qcc.cuny.edu/write and click on "Job Opportunities." Or stop by L-118 to ask for an application from Joe Labozzetta, your potential future supervisor!

-- Jonathan Cajas

Contributors: This edition of The Campus Writer is brought to you by: Blaise Bernardo, Nadine Cavanaugh, Christina Denny, Maya Grant, Karen Gregov, Joe Labozzetta, Melanie Lee, Lorraine Mesagna, Gina Mingione, and Valerie Pristupa.

WRITING CENTER VOICES



Joe Labozzetta is the Academic Resource Center Manager in the Campus Writing Center at Queensborough Community College. He handles the day-to-day operations of the CWC, including the scheduling, hiring, and training of our tutors. He is a grammarian with a love for horse racing, meteorology, and cats.

Q: How did you find yourself in education?

A: I started as a nightclub manager for eleven years, and it was a very stressful job. I decided to go to Queens College and pursue a degree in meteorology because I always loved the weather. As it turned out, I really liked my English classes, and I decided I wanted to be a high school English teacher instead.

I became a tutor and tutored English students at QCC. When I got my degree in 2003 and started to student teach, I realized I preferred working with adults. A full time position opened at QCC as an Instructional Support Specialist in 2003 and in 2006, we became the CWC.

Q: Why do you think the CWC receives a steady increase of students every year?

A: I've used a lot of my nightclub promoting skills to get the word out and form partnerships with people. I was confident that once I got professors to give the center a try, that they and their students would see this place could really help them.

Q: What are your goals for the CWC?

**Q & A with Joe Labozzetta,
CWC Academic Resource Center Manager**
By Gina Mingione

A: My biggest goal is for every student and every staff member to know what we are, who we are, where we are, and exactly what we do.

Q: Did you always believe in a student-centered philosophy?

A: Yes. When I was first hired as a tutor, the director at that time had already instituted that philosophy. It was easy for me to adapt to it because it's common sense. If a student is going to improve, they have to learn from their own mistakes. One of our early mottos was "We are Here to Create Independent Learners" and that's still in our handbook today.

Q: What do you want our students to know about the CWC that they might not already know?

A: I'd like students to know why we tutor in such a student-centered fashion and why we don't just give them the answers. Many students think we don't want to help them because we ask so many open-ended questions. What we're doing is good for them! We can also help with general study strategies because our tutors are trained to share their knowledge. That's how we learn--by talking to people who have done the same thing before us.

Q: Who is your favorite Beatle?

A: Paul. Some of his songs from Wings are even better than Beatles songs, and he's still going today!

CWC Poetry

Your Assignment

Welcome. I'm your poem.
Come and peruse me. Pursue me.
Examine me. Explore me.
Enjoy me.
Bite off my rind
And squeeze the juices
Into your mind.
Pierce me, poke me.
Tease out the meanings
My author didn't know were there.
Wade yourself in;
Swim in me.
Talk to me.
And when you're done,
When you've climbed out of me
And patted yourself off,
Pass me on.
Share me, declare me.
Cut and paste me
Into your Facebook page.
Make me a meme.
Make a meme of me.
Then dice me up
And sprinkle me across
Your essay.

I hope you get an A.

-- Melanie Lee

VISIONS...

By Nadine Cavanaugh

First drafts can be tricky to write, but if you follow these steps, then getting started might be less scary!

- 1.** Remember that your first draft will not be perfect--and that's OK. Many people suffer from the pressure of having the perfect (first) draft, but in truth, that doesn't exist! Think of your first draft as something you can build upon over time; you don't need to get it right on the first try. Focus on what your task is, and at each point of your writing process, ask yourself "Am I following all the assignment guidelines?" If the answer is "yes," then you're one step closer to getting there.
- 2.** If the professor asks you questions in the assignment sheet, answer them. Many times when a professor's assignment sheet is loaded with questions, it's not to intimidate you, but rather to help you think of the assignment. If you're a writer who either struggles with getting started or staying on task, use the questions the professor provides to develop a stronger response. Example: If your assignment asks, "How has this experience influenced your personality or feelings?" you could first brainstorm details about the experience in question, and how that experience affected you; then as a second step, use these ideas to include a clear and well-supported answer in your paper.
- 3.** OUTLINE! It can be tedious, but the more time you spend organizing your ideas, the easier it will be to sit and write your draft. Need to prove a thesis? Use an outline to plan out how you want to go about proving your point. Need to incorporate research? Use an outline to plan out where each source could go. Come up with a point that doesn't quite fit with the rest of the paper? Scrap it and work in a better one.
- 4.** Come to the Campus Writing Center. Here at the CWC, writing tutors can help guide you through brainstorming, researching and organizing your paper. We can also give feedback or pointers on any stage of writing your draft, whether you have one paragraph or ten pages.

...AND REVISIONS

Be your own writing consultant! Ask yourself these questions when revising your first draft

- 1.** Does what you have written match what the professor is asking of you for the assignment? Take note of any points in the draft where you go off-topic. If your professor commented on the draft, review each point marked up, and revise each one.
- 2.** Do you notice patterns in your writing? Look for mistakes you might be repeating throughout the essay. Do you notice an abundance of fragments? Is there a particular word you use many times throughout the paper that you should find a synonym for?
- 3.** Have the sources you used proven your point? Whether your quotes are from secondary research or a piece of literature, you want them to provide strong support for your point or thesis. If a quote does this, then great; if not, consider replacing it.
- 4.** Is the writing cohesive/does it flow? Make sure the ideas you discuss in your paper follow a specific train of thought. One idea in the paper should easily segue into the next one. Strong transitions will allow your essay to run smoothly instead of jumping from one point to another.
- 5.** What do you think you did well? Give yourself credit for what you did well in the paper and ask yourself if you can repeat those successes. Perhaps there is one section of the essay that is really well-developed; take note of the steps you took to get there, and try to apply those steps to another part of the essay.



YOUR PROFESSOR'S COMMENTS...DECODED

“S-V”? ‘Awk’? Ack! What does this mean?”

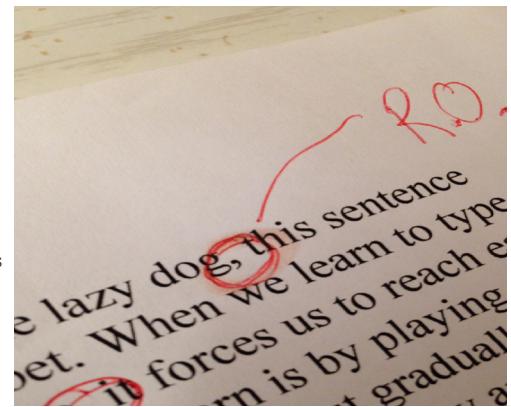
FACULTY CORNER

One valuable way professors speak to students about writing is through commenting on paper drafts. Whether your professors write feedback in red pen or type it online through Blackboard, it takes them a lot of time and thought (and sometimes coffee) to mark up a whole stack of papers.

Unfortunately, sometimes students do not understand all of their professors' comments. Students will bring a graded paper into the writing center and ask, “What does R.O. mean? Why did my professor circle this?” CWC tutors are always happy to help answer these questions, so you can respond to all of your instructor's feedback when revising.

Reviewing your professor's comments closely is your first step to a fabulous final draft or a well-deserved higher grade on a paper re-write. To help you with this task, we polled several CWC tutors who are also instructors. Below, we've listed and “decoded” four of the comments from professors that students most frequently ask about:

“Frag.” This means you have a **sentence fragment**. Your sentence expresses an incomplete thought. A fragment is missing either a subject or a complete verb.



How do I fix it? You need to complete the sentence by adding in the missing part of speech, or by connecting it with the sentence that precedes or follows it.

Fragment with missing subject: Because they were expecting a smaller margin of error.

Possible correction: The researchers were surprised because they were expecting a smaller margin of error.

Fragment with missing main verb: An author that students first read in high school.

Possible correction: She is an author that students first read in high school.

“R.O.” A **run-on sentence**, which is often abbreviated as R.O., is another frequent error. A run-on sentence expresses two or more complete thoughts which are not joined correctly.

One type of run-on is a fused sentence: My laptop is new I can't believe how light it is. (incorrect)

Another type is a comma splice: My laptop is new, I can't believe how light it is. (incorrect)

How do I fix it? You can correct run-on sentences in several ways, such as by breaking them into separate sentences, adding a semi-colon, or adding a comma and conjunction like and, or, nor, yet, or because:

My laptop is new. I can't believe how light it is.

My laptop is new; I can't believe how light it is.

My laptop is new, and I can't believe how light it is.

“S-V” This is a short-hand way of writing that you have a **subject-verb agreement error**. It means that the subject and the verb in your sentence do not agree in number. For example, consider the sentence “The bookstore sell textbooks and snacks.” The subject (bookstore) is singular because it refers to one specific shop. However, the verb “sell” goes with a plural noun in this sentence.

How do I fix it? To correct a subject-verb error, first decide if you want a singular or plural noun, and then choose the verb form that matches. One bookstore or several bookstores?

Singular subject (correct): The bookstore sells textbooks and snacks.

Plural subject (correct): The bookstores sell textbooks and snacks.

(continues...)

(...continued)

“Awk.”

Short for “awkward,” this is perhaps one of the trickiest comments from a professor, because it is used for many different kinds of errors.

What makes a sentence or passage “awkward”? We find that awkward sentences can have various problems ranging from poor syntax, clarity, or word choice to incorrect verb forms and missing articles.

How do I fix it? Because awkward sentences usually have more than one error, it’s hard to fix them by changing just one or two words.

Here is a simple strategy we might use at the CWC when helping students re-write awkward sentences: Pretend a friend is pointing to that sentence and asking, “What do you mean?” Say your answer aloud, without looking at your original “awk.” sentence. Sound better? Write that explanation down and use it instead.

More tips for making the most of your professor’s comments:

1. If you are confused by any feedback or want more information on how to improve, try to meet with your professor to review the paper.

2. Double check your course syllabus. Sometimes, instructors list the marks they will use on papers and what they mean.

3. Meet with a CWC tutor to ensure you understand each comment and how to revise that aspect of your paper.

4. Review your revised paper before submitting, and compare it to the draft. Did you clear up each issue your professor flagged? Don’t forget to critique the rest of your paper for similar errors. Your professor may not have marked each place where you made the same mistake.

TigerWrite is Ready to Roar

Did you know that the CWC offers writing feedback online? Called TigerWrite, this e-tutoring service is available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There’s no line, it’s free, and no appointment is necessary!

To use TigerWrite, simply click on the “TigerWrite e-tutoring” button on the CWC website. You can log in using your TigerMail username and password. Once logged in, upload your paper draft and give us some details about the assignment requirements.

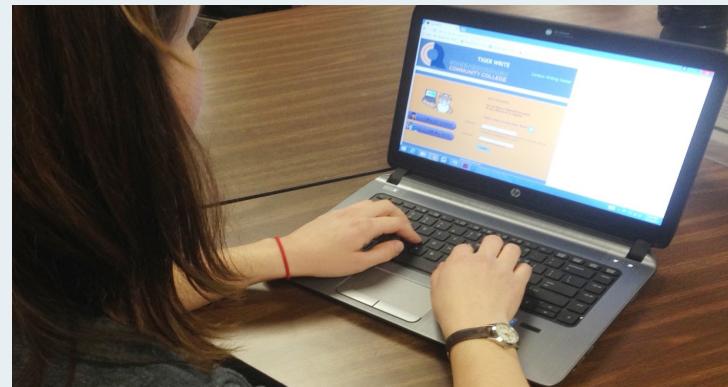
You should also include a sentence to the e-tutor about the kind of feedback you’d like, or any concerns you have about the assignment. Then, you can submit the paper to us, and we will reply within 48 hours. On weekdays, you will usually receive your feedback within 24 hours.

TigerWrite can be a useful service if you have a full or partial draft, and if you do not have enough time on campus to visit the CWC in person. You also need to have more than two days before the assignment is due, to give yourself enough time to receive the feedback and revise your draft.

If you have a lot of questions about your paper, or if you want to practice working through specific grammar or other writing concerns, TigerWrite is not as helpful as a face-to-face session with a tutor. And because it is an asynchronous service, you and the e-tutor are not online at the same time. That means that you cannot ask follow-up questions of each other during the tutoring session.

TigerWrite is an increasingly popular service, and the CWC has more than tripled the number of trained e-tutors since September 2016. Whether you have an English essay, a nursing research paper, or an application essay, TigerWrite is ready for you. Check it out!

--Christina Denny



CWC EVENTS - NOVEMBER 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
12	13 Conversation Hour 12-1pm Reading Strategies Workshops 12:10-1pm 1:10-2pm	14 Reading Strategies Workshops 1:10-2pm 2:10-3pm 3:10-4pm	15 Conversation Hour 12-1pm Reading Strategies Workshops 1:10-2pm 5:10-6pm	16 Reading Strategies Workshops 9:10-10am 1:10-2pm Conversation Hour 12-1pm 3-4 pm	17	18 Reading Strategies Workshop 12:10-1pm
19	20 Conversation Hour 12-1pm Reading Strategies Workshops 12:10-1pm 1:10-2pm	21 <i>Classes and tutoring follow Friday schedule</i>	22 Conversation Hour 12-1pm	23	24 <i>College closed (no tutoring)</i>	25
26	27 Conversation Hour 12-1pm Reading Strategies Workshops 12:10-1pm 1:10-2pm	28 Conversation Hour 12-1pm 4:5 pm Reading Strategies Workshops 1:10-2pm 2:10-3pm 3:10-4pm	29 Conversation Hour 12-1pm Reading Strategies Workshops 1:10-2pm 5:10-6pm	30 Reading Strategies Workshops 9:10-10am 1:10-2pm Conversation Hour 12-1pm 3-4 pm	Dec. 1	Dec. 2 Reading Strategies Workshop 12:10-1pm

CWC EVENTS - DECEMBER 2017

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Conversation Hour
12-1pmReading Strategies
Workshops
12:10-1pm
1:10-2pmReading Strategies
Workshops
1:10-2pm
2:10-3pm
3:10-4pmReading Strategies
Workshops
1:10-2pm
5:10-6pmReading Strategies
Workshops
9:10-10am
1:10-2pm

CWC Write In!!!

Center is open 9
am-11 pm

10

11

Conversation Hour
12-1pmReading Strategies
Workshops
12:10-1pm
1:10-2pm

12

Last day of classes
Weekly appointment tutoring ends

13

14

15

16

Final Exams

17

18

19

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21

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23

*Final Exams*Walk-in tutoring
and one-time ap-
pointments end**January Session CWC Hours (Jan. 2-23, 2018)**

Monday-Thursday 10-6

Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-3