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ABSTRACT

Providing a complex representation of a beginning writing tutor's role, this monograph, written as a journal, was drawn from a tutor's own perceptions and those of her students. While refinement of composition skills frames the entire narrative, the day-by-day record of the tutor's first quarter also emphasizes such skills as goal setting, effective questioning, and motivating students to become self-confident learners. The appendix includes information sheets given to students and tutors at the Writing Center, Student Learning Center at the University of California, Berkeley; the sheets deal with how to get the most out of tutoring, goal setting for writing tutors, the goal-setting process, and how to avoid doing a student's homework. A measure of student tutoring style, a personal checklist of tutoring skills, and an instructor's guide to marking symbols and grammatical terms are also included in the appendix. (HOD)

PEER TUTORING IN BASIC WRITING: A TUTOR'S JOURNAL

By

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Classroo Research Study No. 4

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Preface

Each year dozens of undergraduate peer tutors like Jackie Goldsby work with their students in the Writing Center, part of the Student Learning Center on the Berkeley campus of the University of California. Most apply for positions either to be paid tutors or to earn up to five units of Pass/Not Pass credit through Education 197, a field studies course established in 1973 and taught by S.L.C. staff under the sponsorship of James Gray, Director of the Bay Area Writing Project. Some come as volunteers. Those who are selected must have a grade point average of *B* or better and a faculty recommendation, they must be competent writers interested in becoming outstanding writers, and they must pass a rigorous screening interview which includes an assessment of their writing, a practical test of how they respond to actual student writing, and a discussion of a case study. These carefully selected undergraduate tutors are qualified to start tutoring before they receive extensive training, even though most have never taught before.

Despite the fact that tutors like Jackie start "cold" with their first students, they quickly pick up effective tutoring strategies and techniques because they all participate in an intensive training course while they are tutoring. They attend weekly seminars, keep journals, read professional literature, write papers, analyze their own tutoring styles via videotape, critique each other's writing, attend workshops run by guest lecturers, and meet frequently with their supervisor/instructor. This formal training is supplemented by a tutoring environment that is rich in support and resources. For the most part the

tutoring is conducted at tables in the center of a large, open room, and tutors can easily observe each other at work and can consult with each other as problems and questions arise. Additional help is always available to tutors and their students from writing, reading, and study skills specialists whose desks border the tutoring area. There is also a resource library in the same room that includes books, worksheets, exercises, and self-paced programs such as computer-assisted instruction in grammar.

A major challenge for a tutor is to establish rapport with a student and to state tutoring/learning goals clearly so that the student will be encouraged to see the same tutor on a regular basis, usually once a week. Such closeness with tutees is especially critical since tutors work with students who come to the Center voluntarily and who do not earn academic credit for being tutored.

Most of our peer tutors are juniors and seniors, but sometimes we use freshmen and sophomores when we come across individuals like Jackie Goldsby, a Black student who came into the University with advanced standing and was a sophomore when she wrote her journal. She went on that year to distinguish herself both academically and in service to the student community, winning one of the 1980-81 EPO/AA Outstanding Achievement Awards. Like the many other talented individuals who have completed our tutor training course, Jackie seemed to grow by leaps and bounds while applying her book learning to the practical needs of real people. Jackie's journal speaks for the growth of all these tutors and their students, as well as for the promise of those to come. We hope that beginning tutors in similar programs at other schools will be encouraged by reading about Jackie's frustrations and rewards.

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Introduction

All beginning writing tutors at the Student Learning Center keep weekly journals in which they record and reflect upon their tutoring sessions. Stepping back from their work, they can form clearer impressions of the strengths and needs of their students and can evaluate the effectiveness of their responses to each student's writing. The journal encourages continuity, for the tutor can always return to her entries to remind herself of her direction, and she can make and record plans for future meetings. In addition, the act of writing helps her to synthesize what she is learning about composition and herself as a teacher through seminar discussions, course reading, and, most importantly, through practice. She can then consciously apply her new knowledge to her work. As each journal is read and carefully commented upon weekly, it permits an open and instructive dialogue between the tutor and her supervisor. The journal thus keeps the tutor aware of her various teaching methods, and the continuity it provides encourages her to review her progress and set new goals.

What makes Jackie Goldsby's quarter-long account so useful to others, aside from its candor, is its detailed attention to the concerns of all writing tutors. Naturally, refinement of composition skills frames the entire narrative, but skills such as goal setting, effective questioning, and motivating students to become self-confident learners are also stressed. The reader will very likely want to borrow teaching strategies from Jackie, and he may even be inspired to keep his own journal. He is certain to appreciate both the complexity of the tutor's work and the necessary role he plays in the educational

network.

From their earliest meetings, Jackie invites her four students to sketch their histories as writers and as people. While she wisely avoids becoming either counsellor or chum, she is ever aware that the tutor, and particularly the writing tutor, sits elbow to elbow with the whole person. Her tact and concern encourage trust, and she soon discovers that one student is troubled by the disparity between the culture of his agricultural hometown and that of the University, while another had become an alcoholic in high school. Knowing the pressures her students go home to, in addition to understanding how they feel about writing, allows her to be both sensitive and demanding. And she does insist that students work seriously and hard, for they have much to learn before they will write college level prose. Motivation is crucial, since, as she writes, "The sessions are only as productive as (the student) chooses to make them." Yet she asks no more of each student than of herself; from first conversations about each student's high school preparation and assessments of writing samples she gathers enough information about the student's strengths and weaknesses to begin the long process of diagnosis and response that is the fabric of the journal.

Two students are so poorly prepared that they are unfamiliar with the parts of speech. What does one do to explain fragments and run-together sentences, agreement and parallel structure errors to someone who can't identify verbs and nouns? Even more difficult, how can the tutor teach the student to scrutinize her own sentences so that she can detect and correct such errors? Here, one to one instruction is essential. Beginning with what she knows the student to have as a base, Jackie explains such things as basic sentence patterns or subordination and modification and then directs the student to look at his or her own constructions, word by word. This activity is both arduous and tremendously time consuming, as she points out, but analyzing one's own sentences is ultimately more economical and perhaps more engaging than running through those in workbooks or on the computer. Once the student

begins to understand what to look for, Jackie asks him or her to work through at home a few particularly pretzled sentences from his or her compositions.

But grammar can only be taught piecemeal when the tutor has no more than twenty hours in which to address all of the students' writing problems, and grammar errors are particularly resistant to instruction. Often, a student who knows what she wants to say and who has some control over the shape of an idea will write fairly clear sentences. Thus we encourage tutors to spend proportionately more time on structure, which can be more easily taught. By the third week of tutoring, Jackie had made a presentation on paragraph structure to the other tutors in her training seminar, so she is well prepared to analyze and discuss those paragraphs her students write. While she uses terms like *direct*, *suspended*, and *pivotal* in her journal, she does not assail students with them, but rather explains the need for topic sentences, development, and transitions from both the writer's and the reader's point of view. Further, reading sections of the various handbooks available in the Writing Center, including her favorite, *The Random House Handbook*, aids her in explaining to students that the thesis is "the core of an essay." Helping the student to develop unified and succinct statements of a central position is a key feature of her instruction. By asking students to pay attention to the logical framing of the whole essay during all stages of composing, from planning and shaping, to revision, to studying a returned paper, she teaches logic and control. Because she works inductively from the student's own creations, she can give them a rich and flexible sense of structure, rather than imposing a rigid five-paragraph model. She is rewarded for insisting that they think about their craft when one student suddenly turns to her to explain what he has just realized, that the topic sentence is in some ways similar to the thesis.

Discussions of style are less frequent than those about structure, largely because writers who must struggle with language to hold their ideas in place are not yet ready to fuss with the intricacies of effect.

But choppiness does evoke a few remarks about sentence combining, and pretentious language meets with an appropriate shudder. The timeliness of her close reading allows for changes to be made while the work is still under construction. Often merely asking a student what he or she means by a word or phrase and suggesting, "Well, why don't you write *that*?" will clear up a stylistic infelicity or a grammar error.

Certainly no tutor, sleeves rolled up and elbow-deep in composition, can avoid seeing writing as a process, but reading Donald Murray's "Write Before Writing" and Linda Flowers' differentiation of reader- and writer-based prose can make the tutor more conscious of what she does. In seminar, tutors compare their own composing strategies, exposing, often for the first time, their idiosyncracies and discovering essential commonalities. Jackie wants her students to be aware that certain steps, either primarily generative or primarily analytical, from dissecting the assignment, to brainstorming, to drafting and redrafting, are crucial to the success of a paper. Yet she understands that her students are still apprentices of the craft of composing. When one student becomes blocked, she comments in the journal about how her preoccupation with an idealized finished product prevents her from discovering what she has to say. Although the student resists free-writing as a means of getting her thoughts flowing, Jackie's encouragement and faith that the problem is temporary, combined with what she has taught the student about how to write, carry the student beyond the impasse.

Tutoring, then, is more than working with a student on objective "writing problems," whether structural or grammatical; in almost every session the tutor meets the frustrations and anxieties, and, in rewarding moments, the elations of her students. In addition, she must take stock of her own feelings and limits, for tutoring draws on her emotional as well as her diagnostic resources. The major confrontation in the journal grows out of one student's unwillingness to cooperate with Jackie, even though he clearly needs her assistance. Unsettled by his rudeness and even contempt, she spends weeks deciding to ask

him to get another tutor. In the process, she must explore what it means to care for a student. When another student realizes that he won't pass the course that he is putting so much effort into, he begins to lose his motivation and finally breaks down in tears before he can accept, as she has, that he can't learn all he needs to know in a mere ten weeks. Building confidence is critical, and although most tutors, like Jackie, begin by feeling a little anxious about how much they know or how helpful they can be, they soon find themselves steadying others. Students are more likely to learn more from one thing done well than from fifty corrections. As Jackie knows her students' writing so well, she perceives even small improvements, and she insists that the student not only accept her praise or the teacher's, but that she understand exactly what she has done right.

One means of ensuring noticeable progress and of ordering the many tasks which seem to demand simultaneous attention is goal setting, and goal setting is thematic to the journal. It allows Jackie to create with the student a frame of reference for their meetings, so important in that our tutors meet with diversely prepared students who are taking a broad range of courses, and so are not asked to follow any system of instruction. While this freedom allows them to fit their skills to the individual's needs quite nicely, it can also make for unfocused and unproductive ramblings. When both people know what they want to accomplish in an hour, the time can be well used. Ongoing discussions about grammar errors or essay structure can take up half an hour, without ignoring the present assignment. While general goals extend over a period of weeks, the agenda for a particular hour can be set at each meeting. The very act of keeping a journal assists the tutor in deciding what her priorities are, as do case study presentations in seminar, conversations with supervisors and fellow tutors, and instructors' comments on papers. But what Jackie demonstrates so well is that the tutor does not decide on the goals alone. Were she to do so, she would stifle motivation and create dependencies. Setting goals together is perhaps one of the most important collaborations of tutor and student.

Not only does it make for better communication and more productive effort, it teaches students how to teach themselves, and this is the aim of all good tutoring.

Finally, because successful tutoring so clearly depends on focusing a student's thinking through directive inquiry, Jackie assesses her own questioning strategies. Ellen Nold at Stanford, among others, has shown that even experienced tutors take up far more than half of a conference with their own talk, so in seminar we study videotapes of each tutor, noting how much room she gives the student as well as observing whether she generally asks open or closed-ended questions and whether she is willing to wait for a thoughtful response. Naturally, too much self-consciousness in early stages might overburden a new tutor adjusting to an extremely demanding role. Jackie's interest in how effective her questioning is develops as she finds firm ground. As we read these and other self-evaluative portions of her journal, we are reminded that she is not only teaching others, but teaching herself to teach as well.

This journal, then, gives us a complex representation of the tutor's role drawn from her own perceptions and those of her students. She is definitely not someone who will edit a paper or do a student's thinking for her, because she wants to give the student skills to do without her. But she shares with the student all that she already knows about writing, and through reading, discussion, and practice, broadens that knowledge. She differs from the teacher in that, though both instruct, she is primarily a collaborator who need not be an expert. Like Jackie, she will find the instructor's diagnostic skills useful in giving her direction, and she will initiate frequent conversations with the instructor to ensure that they are not working at cross purposes. She will also encourage the student to meet with the teacher as often as possible, to draw upon all of the academic community's resources. Thus, while she may discuss exam skills, time management, or vocabulary building, she can, if necessary, direct the student to a Study Skills Counselor or a Reading Specialist. And although she can give student-to-student

advice about interesting courses and financial aid, she will be sure that the student consults with academic or EOP/AA Counselors. The tutor not only does not have the training to solve every problem, but more importantly, she doesn't have the time. Her own role as a student, while it fosters trust and sympathy, keeps her quite busy. To keep from overtaxing herself, she must remember that her primary responsibility is simply to work with her students' writing. She will find that challenging enough as she moves from large concerns with structure down to the minutae of phrasing or as she travels with the student the continuum of the writing process. As she does so, she learns more about herself as a writer and may even discover her vocation.

The rewards of tutoring are enormous, not only in that the tutor learns through a combination of study and practice, but in that her efforts are much appreciated by her students. Most tutors claim that the experience has been a high point of their undergraduate education. Having been students so long themselves, they are delighted to put what they have learned into practice as working members of the college community. We see in Jackie's journal how satisfying this can be, especially when she comes to a moment at which she can write, "I wish I could see (this session) on videotape. I sincerely believe that this was my best effort so far as a tutor." While we can not replay that hour, we do have a day-by-day record of her first quarter as a tutor. We will be better tutors, and better teachers, for reading it.

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A Tutor's Journal

Jackie Goldsby

9/25/80

This was my first day of tutoring, and the extra time my tutee spent making his way to the Writing Center was for me fifteen minutes of prolonged anxiety. Although I had gained some tutoring experience working as an English teaching assistant for the Professional Development Program,[1] somehow I felt that my work there hadn't prepared me for what I was about to do. No longer was I tutoring high school students whose grades in the PDP course wouldn't be recorded on official transcripts. Instead, I was about to tutor a "real" student--a college student--in a course I had never taken before and had heard some students complain about: Subject A.[2] I looked at my watch; it was 10:10 and *my* student, Jose Martinez, hadn't arrived yet. At 10:15 a Latino male walked up to the reception counter, checked in, and sat down at the table next to mine. I tried to guess if he were indeed my tutee.

[1]Sponsored and supported by UC Berkeley's Special Scholarship Committee, PDP is an honors-level program designed to prepare highly motivated minority high school students to enter career fields in the sciences, engineering, and business.

[2]Subject A is a University-required writing course which emphasizes grammar, essay development and organization. It is taken by students who score below 600 on the CEEB English Achievement Test or do not pass the department's diagnostic essay examination.

The awkward exchange went something like this:

"Excuse me, but by any chance, are you Jose Martinez?"

"No."

"Oh."

Somewhat embarrassed, I returned to my table and decided to wait. Well, he finally showed up--Jose Martinez, a "real" student.

Jose isn't discouraged about having been held for Subject A; in fact, he has a good attitude toward the course. Jose's "enthusiasm" comes in part from his first impressions of the class. According to Jose, the instructor shows more than a passing interest in the students, and his twenty-two classmates seem friendly and cooperative. While he certainly doesn't lack confidence in himself, that self-assured air is tinged with a bit of cockiness, something I detected when he informed me that he "barely had to take Subject A." Nevertheless, he plans to put a lot of time into the course, twelve to fifteen hours per week. Given his other classes, Spanish 1 and Math P, I think Jose could make such a time commitment to Subject A if he needed or wanted to.

As we discussed his method of writing papers, I discovered that Jose's high school preparation left him with a fragmented sense of the writing process. It wasn't too difficult to figure out that, during his first two years in high school, his teachers had stressed grammar above anything else. Perhaps this wouldn't have been so bad, except that he didn't have ample opportunity to apply those mechanics to his own writing, to go beyond doing exercises from a grammar handbook; during his senior year, Jose only wrote two extensive papers, term papers, in English and Physics. Jose doesn't seem to see writing as a process. While he claims to understand the importance of revision, he doesn't know that a thesis sentence is the core of an essay from which you build your argument which, in turn, gives you the material to revise in the first place.

Lisa Cunningham, a freshman in Subject A, articulates her ideas well, but she has problems concisely transcribing those thoughts onto

paper. What I interpreted as a good sign, though, was *her* ability to recognize her writing problems: wordiness, imprecision, pretentiousness, and run-on sentences. While these and other problems surfaced as we read through her rough draft, Lisa, when prompted by me, could take one of her convoluted phrases or sentences, clarify its meaning, and construct a more precise statement.

It was obvious that, as she worked through this rough draft, her prose became tangled in a web of pretentious language. But, because she was able to extricate herself from that linguistic mess by talking about her ideas and because I knew that she'd have to finish working on the paper alone, I suggested to her the possibility of doing some focused freewriting--writing out whatever thoughts on the particular topic that came to mind--by using a tape recorder instead of the usual paper and pen. What I was offering to Lisa was a method I had tried once before with relative success. Admittedly, I don't know how practical or useful it will be for her, but I had no other guaranteed strategies to set before her in its place. Lisa responded enthusiastically to the idea though. It's her decision whether or not she'll decide to try it.

I was really pleased at how our session turned out. Though she didn't admit this to me, Lisa came to the Writing Center to find an editor. Because her responses were clearer than those in her original draft, Lisa was pleased to see her paper take on a new shape with a redefined and more focused thesis statement. And because I didn't yield under the pressure to hand Lisa a cleanly edited paper, I was pleased with myself.

9/29/80

At 1:20 p.m., Enrique Hernandez rushed in to the Writing Center, plopped down in the seat next to me, and blurted out "I can't write!" Unlike Jose, Enrique has no pretentions about his writing abilities. As we read through his paper, which was due the following day, I noticed that Enrique relies on simplistic language and sentence structure, and

that his prose is flawed by serious problems such as run-ons and modification errors. Many of these difficulties probably stem from the fact that English is his second language. Born in Mexico, Enrique has been in this country for only six years and Spanish is the language spoken in his home. Yet, when forced to confront this problem--I tried to show him how to build upon a basic s-v-o sentence with modification--Enrique avoids the issue by claiming that he can't write because he doesn't know the language. Somehow I feel that his attitude will be a major obstacle in his getting through Subject A. I'm also worried about Enrique's reading ability. When I asked him to read his paper aloud, he stumbled over and hesitated at words. I think I should direct Enrique to a reading specialist here in the Writing Center to test his reading level.

Like Jose, Enrique had to write only two papers during his senior year of high school. Unfamiliar with the writing process, he doesn't know what a thesis statement is either. Because he was preoccupied with finding grammatical errors in his prose, Enrique couldn't see, without direction, the larger, more global problems with his paper: *weak* organization and a "misplaced" thesis statement. However, at the end of our session, Enrique had an improved and relocated thesis, a much-needed outline, and a bit of confidence about tackling the revision of his paper.

Lisa came in, paper assignments in hand, wanting someone to choose her topic for her. Though she seemed interested in a topic which required a close analysis of a text, Lisa shied away from it because she's intimidated by the prospect of transforming her spoken ideas into analytical written prose. Because she wants *one* answer to her questions about technique, Lisa has difficulty accepting the fact that there is "more than one way to skin a cat."

I didn't feel good about this session at all. Even though Lisa only received her assignment this morning, I was disappointed that she didn't come prepared to "brainstorm." Because she really had nothing

to say and couldn't explain the topics to me, Lisa couldn't generate any writing. Somewhat exasperated, I pointed out to her that, if she would have read the directions more carefully, she would have discovered that the instructor, by posing a number of questions in the text of the assignment, had limited what Lisa could discuss anyway. In fact, the questions could serve as guides to construct her thesis statement. We then devised some "points to be considered" so that Lisa could get started on her drafts.

9/30/80

Today's session with Jose went as "smoothly" as yesterday's with Lisa because Jose didn't have anything prepared for us to discuss either. After he managed to choose a topic to write about I told Jose that he shouldn't stop there, that we should spend the remaining fifteen minutes generating a thesis and basic outline. I asked him a lot of questions about the topic but, even though he answered them, Jose didn't take the time to write either the questions or the answers down on paper. I politely tried to convince Jose that it would be to his benefit to jot down the points we discussed. His reluctance to do this, plus his terse reply, "Sure," clued me in to the fact that Jose is impatient. He doesn't appreciate either my questions or suggestions. He wants clear-cut answers now, and he wants them to be given to him. At the end of our session I felt uneasy because Jose left without his thesis or outline written down, and I had a strong feeling that he would forget the points that we had discussed.

10/2/80

Jose Martinez came in today with only one paragraph written for the essay which was due the next day. I was angry at both him and myself, him for not completing more than just a paragraph and for his carelessness in "leaving the outline next to the typewriter," and myself for not making him write down the salient points of Tuesday's discussion.

However, as we discussed the topic, "the power of the word 'university'," I discovered a cause of Jose's seeming impatience with himself. He is an only child of parents who never attended college. The friends he left behind in his rural hometown resent the fact that he chose to attend Berkeley rather than the local junior college. Jose said he felt pressured to perform well, both to please his parents and to prove to his friends that he hadn't betrayed them by coming to Berkeley. He wanted to write the essay from this personal perspective, but as we discussed the thesis and organization of the paper, Jose couldn't stick to the topic--the power of the word "university." Instead of seeing how his paper would need to compare and contrast his perceptions of the word against those of his family and friends, Jose kept his comments at the more emotional, personal level. While these intense feelings could lend an incredibly moving, personal tone to the paper, Jose was so caught up in them that he couldn't stick to his rationally "objective" thesis and outline, and squarely address the topic.

I did mention to Jose my feelings about his lack of preparedness for our sessions, explaining to him that the sessions would only be as productive as he chose to make them. We can't come up with a thesis or an outline unless he gives the assignment some thought beforehand, and the rough draft sessions can't work when he has written only one paragraph. He might have felt as if I were nagging him, but I felt better knowing that I had made sure he knew and understood my point of view.

I began this very long, unbearably hot day with a new student, Teresa Rodriguez. I thought it humorous that we were on the same subway car, sat together on the campus shuttle bus, and waited in the reception area of the Learning Center for three minutes before we realized who the other was. Who else would be there at 8:00 a.m.?

We hit it off right away, not only because Teresa is an energetic, outgoing person, but because we share something in common: we both competed in sports during high school (Teresa's love was track, mine

basketball), contemplated trying out for the teams here at Cal, and reluctantly rejected the idea in order to devote our time and energy to our studies instead.

Teresa has a "different" approach to writing. She doesn't write rough drafts or outlines; she claims she can hold them in her memory. I didn't trust this method, so I asked her to write down everything important that we said. It's hard for me to assess what her particular writing problems are because she had no writing samples for me to read. Yet I detected from her notes and our discussion that her academic vocabulary is too limited, her sentence structures often simplistic, and her prose wordy. Believing that her writing problems are few and not serious, Teresa dismisses her failure to pass the Subject A diagnostic exam too lightly, claiming that she "didn't feel like writing" that day. This justification for her placement in a "remedial" course is validated by the fact that, while in high school, she received *B*'s in college prep survey courses in English literature.

I was both relieved and impressed to discover that she knows the format for the basic five-paragraph essay and the function and importance of a thesis statement.

10/6/80

Reading over Teresa's first graded paper confirmed many of my hunches about her writing problems; her instructor's comments pointed to many trouble spots. Yet, Teresa believes that she's weak in only one major area, "wordiness. You know, saying the same word a lot." Repetition isn't Teresa's only problem; so are wordiness, circumlocution, weak paragraph structure, and imprecision. However, when I asked her how she could correct these flaws, revise the sentences, she could not tell me how she would do it.

Teresa not only has problems with organization and structure, she also had a weak foundation in the rudiments of grammar. As we went through her sentences to discuss grammatical errors, Teresa had difficulty identifying subjects, verbs, objects, and gerunds. Teresa told

me that she remembered coordinating conjunctions by humming the tune from ABC's "Grammar Rock" segment, "Conjunction, junction, what's your function? Hooking up words, clauses, and phrases..." What a mnemonic device! I took the opportunity to acquaint Teresa with two additional learning resources in the Writing Center, the grammar worksheets and computer terminals. Covering such topics as subject-verb agreement and subordination, the worksheets and computer programs supply a student with an explanation of errors she might commonly make and supplement this information with exercises to test and sharpen her ability to recognize and correct problematic sentences. However, our grammar reviews are going to have to be more organized if we're ever going to eliminate the errors from her prose; next week, we must definitely set goals!

Because she had an in-class writing assignment this week, Teresa wanted to spend the remaining fifteen minutes discussing how to take an essay exam and to spend the next session doing a timed writing. I asked her how she budgeted her time on the Subject A diagnostic exam. She estimated it as follows:

1. Read the passage: 10 minutes
2. Think: 5 minutes
3. Preliminary writing (i.e., introduction): 20 minutes
4. Re-read the passage: 7 minutes
5. Revise introduction (step 3) and compose rough draft
6. Read the passage again
7. Write the final draft
8. Proofread

I couldn't help but notice that Teresa's method required her to interrupt her writing process in order to re-read the selection under consideration. When I asked her about this, she explained to me that by skimming the passage, she makes sure she hadn't "left anything important out." Another thing that bothered me was that step three didn't include her writing either a thesis or an outline because "they're in (her) head." For a fifty minute exam, though, Teresa would

adjust her plan. She would still review the material for five minutes, but would allocate seven minutes to composing a thesis and outline, leaving thirty-eight minutes for her to write the essay. I wanted to suggest another method to her, but I didn't want to come right out and totally dismiss her plan.

Instead I offered as a model the process I would follow when writing for a fifty minute exam:

1. Read the passage under consideration, underlining key phrases and points, jotting down random notes: 10 minutes.
2. Read the essay topic(s). Try to establish a relationship between them and the reading selection: 3 minutes
3. Skim the passage: 2 minutes
4. Choose a topic on which to write and construct a thesis and a skeleton outline of the main points to be discussed: 10 minutes
5. Write the essay, revising as I go along: 20 minutes
6. Proofread: 5 minutes

I agreed with Teresa's suggestion that, for our next session, she do a timed writing. I know that my method may not be suited for a student with her weak skills, but I want to see how Teresa writes and budgets her time under pressure.

This must be the week for in-class essays. Lisa arrived, anxious to discuss how to budget her time on an essay examination. However, we went over her first corrected paper, or rather the final rough draft, as her instructor keeps all of their papers. According to Lisa, the instructor's only criticism of the paper was that it contained two theses. The problem was more complex than this, though. Instead of directly addressing the topic, "Is there a function for a class like Subject A?" Lisa had attempted to do too much. Although she had attempted to respond to the essay topic, she had taken off on a relatively lengthy discussion of the media's impact on the decline in language skills and had never synthesized these two topics into a unified argument.

I was shocked because, during our first session together, Lisa had come up with *one* thesis which integrated specific examples of how media impinges upon language; and it did, in fact, address the topic. As I read the reader's comments, I felt as if they were directed toward me, too. She raised objections to the paper's content and organization, areas which I was supposed to have checked before I sent Lisa back to the dorms to write. I couldn't figure out what had happened after Lisa left last week. Didn't she retain anything we had discussed? Didn't I get through to her? As much as I tried to think otherwise, the instructor's comments and grade indicated that, unfortunately, I had not.

I perked up a bit when Lisa showed me her final draft for her most recent assignment. It was a *substantial* improvement over the rough draft we had just looked at. I let her know that I was impressed. However, I was even more pleased when Lisa informed me that she had discussed her rough draft with her instructor. Not only did it help improve her paper and boost Lisa's confidence, it also showed, to my relief, that Lisa is utilizing other resources for her writing.

The last thing we did was to review subordination, particularly conjunctive adverbs. After a brief review of the *Random House Handbook*, I had Lisa construct some sentences using conjunctive adverbs, placing them in different locations in the sentence to see the varied emphases and meanings. I also showed her how to use the computer and encouraged her to go through the subordination and, at her suggestion, run-together sentence programs.

10/7/80

I just found out that Jose and Enrique know each other. Jose told me that they attended the same CalSO summer orientation program and that on Enrique's birthday, they went out and got drunk. The clincher is that when they met for lunch today, they informed each other that they were going to the Writing Center for help later on. So what do they discover when they arrive? I tutor both of them, one after the

other!

It seems like this week, or at least today, everybody wants a grammar review. Although Jose's instructor's comments on his paper were minimal, he did point out Jose's major grammatical weaknesses: run-together sentences, fragments, agreement, modification, predication, and reference. (See Appendix) As we reviewed the problematic sentences, Jose quickly caught on. I was reluctant to accept a mumbled "uh-huh" as a symbol of understanding, and I thought that a follow-up review on the computer would drive these points home, but the terminal wasn't operating. We were left with the worksheets. I know he was disappointed about not being able to use the computer.

All wasn't lost though, as he seemed more interested in generating a thesis for his essay. He knew what topic he wanted to write on, but he hadn't done his reading; he admits to spending more time on his Spanish and math. Once we had discussed the essay topic and skimmed the reading selection, I asked him to guess how he might organize the paper. What facts and ideas would he have to gather and evaluate before he attempted to write? He spent about forty minutes doing focused free-writing. When he got stuck, instead of asking me what to do, Jose broke the silence by asking me how my classes were going. When he got "un-stuck" *he* summarized what he had discussed before. I felt more pleased with this session than any we have had because my role in his writing process was minimized. He took charge and was more active in formulating ideas, asking me and himself questions, and trying to answer them himself.

The goal for Enrique's session was to review grammar, run-together sentences and subordination specifically. While he knows the definitions of and rules governing most parts of speech, he hasn't internalized all of what he knows to the point where he actively applies that knowledge to his own writing. I decided that we would work from the worksheets and *The Random House Guide to Basic Writing* because the exercises in each are short and easy to understand. At this point,

Enrique doesn't need to be intimidated by the very things he needs to learn.

As we discussed subordination, Enrique began asking some rather picky, complex questions to which I didn't have satisfactory answers. But once he figured them out on his own, I took the opportunity to let him teach me. Both of us were relieved to discover that I don't know all there is to know about grammar, and more importantly, that our relationship is one of reciprocity, that by sharing knowledge, we can learn from one another. At the end of the session, w [illegible] it that we had accomplished our task: he could construct complex sentences more readily; he understood and could identify the two types of run-together sentences, comma splices and fused sentences. He also responded enthusiastically to my suggestion that he do some additional work on the computer.

In the last five minutes, I asked Enrique how he was doing in his other classes. He finds Anthropology interesting and its reading load challenging, but not difficult. Math P seems to pose few problems; in fact, he thinks he got an *A* on his first quiz. I'm glad that he feels reasonably confident about these classes because with the difficulty he's going to encounter in Subject A, he'll need something or someone else to fall back on for support.

10/8/80

Today's session with Teresa was the first in which I had a student do a timed writing, and it didn't go as smoothly as I had planned. It wasn't working the way I wanted it to. I felt so unproductive. ~~Conscientiously, I had phoned her instructor and asked him what topics~~ I could give Teresa for a mock exam. He informed me that the actual essay topics would come from the week's reading. So that night, I called Teresa and told her to read a three-page article and come prepared to write on one of the questions included in the reading.

She arrived fifteen minutes late, and I had her begin writing immediately. I didn't know what to do with myself, to sit there and watch her write, or to do something else. I debated whether or not to

stop her at various points and discuss what she had written, but I didn't because I felt it was important for Teresa to have some notion of the time restrictions she would have to face during the actual mid-term test. I let her write the entire time, interrupting her only once to see how she was doing. But at 12:00, she wasn't through, and I had to leave; she gave me the paper and said she'd call me.

Neither the session at the Writing Center nor our phone conversation later that evening went the way I wanted them to. I felt that I had mismanaged the time she had spent writing the paper, that the whole exercise had been unorganized. To make matters worse, only I had a copy of the paper, so that when I talked to Teresa on the phone, she had a hard time understanding my comments because she literally couldn't see what I was talking about. I apologized to Teresa for handling the situation so poorly, and, though she said she understood, it didn't help me very much.

As a matter of fact, I became even more anxious and worried because Enrique also wants to do a timed writing, and I don't want what happened today to occur again. Perhaps instead of having him write for fifty minutes, I'll ask him to work for a half-hour, and aim to generate an introduction and a thesis, after which we can discuss what points would have to follow.

Lisa has an in-class writing this week; her instructor gave the class the topics beforehand and will allow the students to bring in an outline. Thus the goal of today's session was to generate a thesis and an outline.

The hour was, perhaps, the most productive Lisa and I have had so far. She did most of the talking and thinking; my comments merely amplified or clarified her thoughts. She asked herself quite a few questions, answering them herself. She did have difficulty, though, making connections between her broad generalizations and her thesis. I think I'm becoming adept at asking questions and gauging whether they're clear or muddled, sparse or too numerous. I tried to have Lisa

follow a line of questioning that would lead her to a possible connection between her ideas, but she wouldn't respond. I didn't want to overwhelm her, so I shut up. After a silence of at least five minutes, she summarized what she had written so far and proceeded to close the paragraph with a solid, though wordy, thesis. Lisa still asked me questions, seeking my approval of her ideas. Instead of capitulating to her demands, I replied, "What do *you* think?"

She said, "You're not going to tell me?"

"No."

When Lisa is forced to think on her own, she can, and does, come up with some interesting ideas, and she seems pleased when *she* develops and refines her own thoughts.

10/9/80

Though we managed to discuss exam-taking strategies and set goals for the remaining weeks of the quarter, today's hour with Enrique was essentially a counseling session. Because Enrique also had an in-class writing this week, I had him read the same article Teresa did so that he'd have something to write about. I gave him thirty minutes to write an introduction and a thesis, and planned, in the remaining twenty minutes, to discuss what he wrote. I noticed, though, that after twenty minutes, he had barely written two sentences. I decided that now would be the time to start talking. I asked him to explain the topic to me. As he did, I saw that he didn't grasp what the question was asking him to do. By answering a series of my questions, Enrique was finally able to explain to me what the assignment required him to write about. Yet it wasn't the essay topic (how and why people believe actors are actually the characters they portray) which stumped Enrique, but rather an example cited in the article. The public's response to Fredric March's portrayal of an alcoholic made Enrique "really identify" with what he was reading and lose sight of what he was supposed to write. During the course of our conversation, Enrique admitted that, during his senior year in high school, he had been an alcoholic. He was working

the graveyard shift at a cannery from 12:00 midnight to 7:00 a.m., going to school from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and working in a restaurant from 3:00 to 11:00 p.m. He claimed that he became so dependent upon alcohol that he had a bottle everywhere: his closet, the trunk of his car, and his school locker. It wasn't difficult for me to see why Enrique "understood" the example in the reading selection. Enrique also hinted that his home life isn't conducive to study because his family constantly fights and argues. Although Enrique talked about this for twenty minutes, I didn't stop him because it seemed that he needed to talk about it.

However, we did get some business done. We decided that we would devote the first fifteen minutes of our sessions to a particular grammar problem, such as fragments, run-together sentences, subordination, and gerunds, and that we would spend the remaining forty to forty-five minutes discussing his essays and reading assignments.

Jose came in wanting me to correct his in-class essay. The well-written, engaging, descriptive piece was flawed by three sentences which had modification and agreement errors as well as subordination problems. We took each sentence and dissected it so he could see the root of the problem. This took considerable time, almost forty minutes, but I think it left Jose with a better understanding of the cause of his problems. Here's how we corrected one of his sentences:

> Someone had shown very much affection for him and he did not comply with her feelings, he made her feel dishonorable and shameful.

I asked him to "diagram" the first half of this sentence:

> Someone had shown very much affection for him

After I explained to him what the subject-verb-object pattern was about, he revised the sentence as follows:

> Someone had shown him very much affection

I then asked Jose to dissect the last half of the sentence, where he

had to see that the two independent clauses couldn't be merely linked by a comma. Correctly identifying the error as a comma splice, he decided to subordinate the second clause:

> Someone had shown him very much affection. Because he did not comply with her feelings, it made her feel dishonorable and shameful.

Jose noticed that the two sentences lacked a connector and that the second sentence contained a reference error. His final draft of the sentence rea.

> Someone had shown him very much affection, but because he did not comply with her feelings, he made her feel dishonorable and shameful.

10/13/80

Teresa came in today with last week's in-class writing, loaded with errors: subordination, parallel structure, tense consistency, and fragments. To top it off, her tone was inconsistent throughout the paper. After we corrected sample sentences from each problem area, I told Teresa that we needed to set some definite goals. I explained to her that if she had a firm command of grammar, she could detect sentence errors in her prose, know *why* they're errors, and know *how* to construct correct, well-crafted sentences. We set up a work schedule like Enrique's, with fifteen minutes of the session to be spent on grammar, and the remaining forty-five minutes to focus on essay topics and assignments. I asked Teresa what areas she felt she needed to work on. She identified her major problems and ranked them in the following order: (1) verb tense; (2) subordination; (3) parallel structure; and, (4) fragments.

"Why do fragments occupy the last position on the list?"

"Because," Teresa explained, "they're easier to pick out."

Searching for a tactful way to break the news to her, I explained to Teresa that a fragment, though it can be easily spotted and may be easily corrected, shows the writer's difficulty or inability to express

a complete idea to the reader. We then shuffled the elements of the list around a bit, coming up with this: (1) verb tense; (2) fragments; (3) parallel structure; and, (4) subordination.

She has a midterm exam on Friday, so I plan to call her instructor and talk to him about how I can go about preparing materials for the next couple of sessions. Teresa requested some worksheets on verb tense in order to work on this problem and, we hope, have it cleared up before she takes the exam.

10/14/80

I don't look forward to my sessions with Jose because I find him difficult to work with. He resists doing his own work and is very flippant when I challenge him on this point. As a result, our relationship is strained, and sometimes I feel as if we're struggling so hard to assert ourselves and define our roles that we actually work against each other.

At the beginning of today's session he explained an upcoming Subject A assignment that seemed a bit confusing to both of us. The instructor seemed to want the students to concentrate on the process they went through to complete a final draft, rather than on the finished product itself. Still, it seemed to me to be a disjointed exercise. At each class meeting this week, Jose is to turn in a chunk of his essay; the introduction paragraph first, the conclusion second, and the body paragraphs last. Today he has to submit his introduction, which he promptly handed to me so that I could "figure out what was wrong with it." Knowing that he wanted me to edit the paragraph, I read it through and then asked Jose to tell me what he felt its strengths and weaknesses were. He quickly defined the paragraph's problem, a lack of unity, and located where the trouble began, the middle of the paragraph. I then asked him what it was he wanted to say and how he could revise the confused middle section to bring out his points more clearly. Jose cooly responded, "I didn't come here for you to ask me questions." It was a real struggle for me to handle the situation in a "civilized"

manner, to remain calm and let only censored thoughts flow out of my mouth. I tried to explain to him that my questions were purposeful, that I felt that it was his responsibility to do the thinking and the writing, and that my role was to facilitate and teach him that process. I was surprised that he had nothing to say in response.

We then returned to discussing the paragraph and how it would function in the essay as a whole. The discussion gave Jose a clearer idea of what direction the paper would have to take, given the assertions of his introduction. Next I asked Jose whether he had completed the run-together sentence and fragment worksheets I had given him. He said no, that he had done some similar exercises in class and now understood how to correct those errors. I then suggested that for our next session he bring in some examples of these errors from his own prose, with corrections.

As he collected his books to leave, Jose informed me that whatever else we did during our next meeting, we should allot at least thirty minutes to correcting the concluding paragraph of this "essay," which would be due later on that day. Verbal altercations like these upset me, make me ponder over what's going wrong in this relationship. I can't understand why Jose tries to intimidate me. If he doesn't feel that he needs a writing tutor, he can simply leave; if he feels that he wants to work with someone else, he can do that, too. But for some reason, I feel responsible for Jose, and the more rational, logical side of this dilemma is that he *needs* the help. At what expense, though? I wonder. This isn't very healthy for either of us, and we ought to set it straight before too long.

10/20/80

Working with Lisa is exciting because she comes prepared to work and does most of the talking. I just listen and ask her questions to sharpen her thoughts and limit her focus. Lisa's assignment for this week was to re-write her essay on an excerpt from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Her instructor had duplicated the original C+ paper for

class discussion, and Lisa had obviously benefitted from her peers' critique as the revised paper was more focused than the original.

Because she thought her revised paper should be richer and more complex in its analysis, Lisa wanted to develop a metaphor for her essay, to create an image of Humpty Dumpty "on the attack." Once she had narrowed her choices down to two, a fencer and a lawyer, we then discussed the merits of both and whether or not the image would obscure the ideas she was trying to convey. For example, she was contemplating casting Humpty Dumpty as a judge, complete with robe and gavel. I asked her, "Could you really see an egg draped in a long, flowing black robe?" Lisa made a list of options open for each and said she would work on them at home.

We then turned our attention to examining her transitions and directed our efforts to making those logical connections which were only clear to her clear for the reader also. After some prodding, Lisa welded together the gaps in her logic and by the end of the hour, she had developed some useful, though wordy, transitional statements.

I'm continually impressed by Lisa's ability to express her thoughts in complex, well-phrased prose and with her willingness to work. It's such fun to work with her.

10/21/80

Though at this point Enrique doesn't possess Lisa's writing skills, I enjoy working with him because he tries so hard and is making progress.

After talking with Enrique's instructor, I decided to do two things which would make my sessions with Enrique more productive: (1) to synchronize our grammar lessons with those of his instructor; and, (2) to be realistic and admit to myself that Enrique probably won't pass Subject A in one quarter, therefore to use our sessions to prepare him for next quarter.

Today we reviewed his progress in the course so far. Like his instructor, I feel that Enrique has definitely improved in his understanding and mastery of grammar. Now what he needs to learn is to

construct a "simple" thesis and to master basic paragraph development. Although he hadn't received his midterm, Enrique felt satisfied with his performance because he had done one thing right: he had written a good thesis in one sentence with "because" clauses.

We then tackled his first in-class essay, which was not only riddled with grammatical errors and vague statements, but also lacked a thesis and adequate paragraph development. I had chosen four sentences packed with problems and had written them on a separate piece of paper. This exercise was very productive because Enrique detected the errors himself, and, after a lot of questions from me, clarified the meaning and constructed a clearer statement. Seeing those sentences out of the context of his essay helped Enrique understand what his sentences were, or should I say weren't, doing. We corrected two sentences this way, and I left it up to him to complete the remaining two for our next session.

Our next job was to analyze how those clumsy sentences were affecting the structure and coherence of his paragraphs, and hence, of his essay. In one paragraph, he was trying to discuss *five* topics!

To get Enrique to do this, I asked him to find the paragraph's theme sentence (Crews' term for topic sentence). I discovered that he didn't know what one was. But this didn't discourage him; when I asked him to try to guess what it was, "theme" being the big clue, he gave me a good definition and then his eyes lit up when he realized, "ohhh... it's like the thee-sis." He found the paragraph's first theme sentence; I circled it. We continued on, and as we discovered each new topic, I circled the statement and Enrique moaned "Ohhh...."

Because Enrique's next assignment was to re-write his midterm, I suggested to him that he follow today's procedure on his own. By locating his thesis and theme sentences he could make sure he would actually have a focus for his paper and that his argument would be centered around one main idea. As Enrique summarized what he had to prepare for our next meeting, I wrote it down twice; that way we each had a copy so that neither one of us could forget what we had planned to do.

I feel uneasy, on edge, when I work with Jose. Perhaps I feel so tense because we've been subtly antagonizing each other, and neither one of us wants to admit it or discuss it openly. Well, this changed as Jose, true to form, came in with a paragraph, due today, for me "to correct."

"I hope you have something else to do because I'm not going to go over this."

"What's wrong?"

For the next twenty minutes, I told him. The underlying theme of my sermonette was that I felt he was using me and that I didn't appreciate it. I explained to Jose that our time together shouldn't and wouldn't be used as an editing workshop. Recalling that my complaints were covered in the Writing Center's worksheet on tutoring policies, I asked Jose if he had read it.

"No," he responded, somewhat surprised that there were actually rules governing a tutoring session.

I handed him the sheet and asked him to read it. Once he was through, I had him explain to me what his rights and responsibilities were, as outlined on the worksheet. He did, claiming that he understood why I was angry. I told Jose that I hoped we wouldn't have to go through such a scene again.

We really couldn't work on his assignment for Thursday, writing an essay in "stages," because his instructor hadn't returned the body paragraphs yet. I plan to talk to his instructor by Monday at the latest. (I can't any sooner; I have midterms this week.) He's giving Jose an inaccurate appraisal of his writing. While Jose has potential, his expository prose is flawed by basic grammatical errors and a lack of depth, yet a typical comment from his instructor reads something like, "Pretty good writing, except for a few 'mod' errors and choppy sentences, plus an embarrassing RTS."[2] Since Jose receives comments like these, I think he resents it when I'm more critical of his writing.

I'm seriously considering dropping Jose. I don't need nor do I want to have to deal with his attitude.

After today's frustrating session with Jose, I was thoroughly elated when Teresa showed me her midterm. She has progressed from receiving "no pass" on her previous essays to a *D+/C-* on the test. Ordinarily, neither Teresa nor I would be nearly as ecstatic over a *D+/C-*, but the letter grade was a sign that she was beginning to do acceptable work.[3] According to Teresa, only she and another student even received grades; the rest of the class failed.

Teresa is fun to work with because, like Enrique, she's determined to learn as much as she can. She frequently comes to the Writing Center to work on the computer grammar programs, and her efforts are beginning to pay off. She has reduced the types of grammatical errors she makes to two, parallel structure and run-together sentences. Although Teresa wants to continue learning about grammar, she realizes that there are other, more critical problems with her prose that she has to bring under control. She simply must stop relying on simplistic sentence patterns to develop her argument; basic s-v-o/c structures don't force her to see the logical connections between her ideas. Further, she frequently lapses into prolonged fits of wordiness, making her prose lumber along as she attempts to explain her point.

Because her assignment was to re-write her midterm, we spent most of the hour reviewing her essay, discussing what it would take to revise it. After she had completed listing the points we discussed, Teresa felt enthusiastic about tackling the topic anew. Even though the instructor had commented on a few rough spots in the exam, I made it a point to remind Teresa that she could be proud of her work and to make sure that she knew what she had done correctly in the paper. She had applied her knowledge of grammar as she proofread, thereby limiting her grammatical errors to two, and she had written a clear thesis and had stuck to her point.

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[3] A *C-* or better is the Subject A department's standard grade for a passing essay.

10/22/80

Lisa came to our session truly excited about her paper. Her instructor had read the rough draft and told Lisa that it was a solid, substantial improvement over the original. What Lisa and I worked on was clearing up her lapses in logic and rebuilding her weak transitions. As usual, she did most of the thinking, and I as usual listened and asked questions. When I think about it, I'm pleased that my ability to ask clear questions is improving and surprised that the questions I ask and the way I ask them differ considerably from student to student.

I really feel at ease when I work with Lisa. Besides being a friendly person, she's always prepared to work and think, which I appreciate immensely. Today's session was extremely productive, as we accomplished two major tasks. We worked on the final revisions of her "Humpty Dumpty" essay and also managed to draw up a timetable of "things to do" in preparation for her next midterm.[4] Next week we're going to concentrate on transitions and paragraph development; the week of her exam she'll do timed writings.

10/23/80

After Enrique apologized for "forgetting" to bring in the rough draft of his midterm re-write, I reminded him that it was his responsibility to bring in his work, that the sessions are only as productive as he chooses to make them. Instead of calling it quits, we decided to work on grammar, coordination to be exact. I felt excited about today's session because Enrique was teaching himself. He is more patient with himself, no longer becoming anxious when he doesn't have the answer right away. Now, Enrique asks *himself* questions, and if he can't figure out the solution, he re-reads his text to find a possible hint or answer to the problem. In his previous essays, Enrique rarely used coordination or subordination correctly or effectively, but he has now

[4]Subject A administers two midterms per quarter.

learned to locate coordinate or subordinate conjunctions, ask himself what type of logic he's trying to employ, and determine whether or not the conjunction actually works in that sentence. That entirely different errors will probably surface in Enrique's prose doesn't bother me, because I know that they are the mistakes he'll have to make if he's going to learn anything. But it's not my grade that we're tampering with, not that there's much harm a bit of experimenting can do. I only hope that Enrique can be as objective and "sophisticated" about this process when he receives his next paper.

His next major in-class writing, the midterm, is two weeks away, so we decided to keep ourselves busy until then. Sixth week we're going to concentrate on thesis statement and paragraph development; seventh week I'm going to give him a mock midterm. Before he left, I had Enrique schedule an appointment to take a reading test; both his instructor and I want to make sure that the difficulty Enrique's having with the course isn't realated to any reading problems.

If there was a time when I thought that Jose actually wanted to provoke me into an argument, it was today. He had the audacity to hand me a paper which was due later that day, and, instead of reading it over with me, occupied himself with a more pressing matter--catching up with the latest news in the campus daily. Being non-assertive, I did not react honestly. Instead, I told Jose that we would only correct the grammatical errors because, with the paper due in three hours, there was no time to repair the damage his conceptual and organizational problems posed. I wanted to make a copy of the essay, and, as I stood up to leave, Jose said nonchalantly, "Could you staple it while you're up there?" Fuming as I ran up the stairs, I got even angrier, mainly at myself, as I waited for the copies. When I returned to our table, I handed Jose the unstapled papers and proceeded to tell him off for the next thirty minutes. I informed him that if he wanted to persist in wasting my time, he should stop coming to see me because there were others who both needed and wanted the help I had to offer. By now he

had put the newspaper away, and he offered the following as a rebuttal:

"I thought the sessions were going okay. I don't understand; what is it that you want me to do?"

"It's not what I want you to do, but rather it's a matter of what you need to do--work--and your problem is that you don't want to put forth much of an effort."

Jose doesn't want to take the initiative to do anything, at least when it comes to writing and working with me. He wants and needs to be told what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. We talked about this for the remainder of the hour, but I know that Jose has the impression that I still want to work with him. I didn't drop enough hints that termination was on my mind. If I'm going to stop tutoring him, I'll have to tell him soon--next Tuesday. Though I wish that I didn't have to do this, it'll be a relief not having to worry about Jose and his problems in the future.

10/27/80

Working from our list of "things to do," Teresa and I concentrated on today's topic, developing thesis statements, by trying to generate a central statement of purpose for her upcoming assignment. Because I was only slightly familiar with the reading, and because Teresa had forgotten most of what she had read, my questions were imprecise and her responses were vague. We agreed that the discussion wasn't going anywhere, and we decided that both of us should re-read the article. One of her options was to write a speculative response to the question, "What changes would be effected if apes master language?" The instructor had made it clear that he didn't want a "Planet of the Apes" scenario. However, because all of her ideas pointed back to the theme of that movie and its sequels, Teresa decided to write on the other assigned topic, an analysis of Martin Luther King's speech, "I Have a Dream."

Together, Teresa and I formulated a thesis statement. First, I asked her what her opinion on the subject was. Did she believe the speech was an example of successful propaganda? She wrote down her

position: "Martin Luther King's speech, 'I Have a Dream,' is a successful piece of propaganda." I then asked her *why* was it successful, what tactics or conventions does King use and why are they effective? At the end of the hour, Teresa had the makings of a limited, focused thesis, and an outline which would develop the "because" clauses of her thesis.

While we discussed her outline, it occurred to me that she has great difficulty expressing her ideas in a concise manner. More often than not, her core assertions are nestled away among a cluster of "you knows." When I ask her to clarify one of her obscure statements, she sometimes looks at me, grins enthusiastically, and says nothing more than "you know," expecting me to understand instinctively what it is she's thinking. Besides replying "no, I don't know," how can I get Teresa to eliminate this vagueness?

Lisa came in today, greeted me with a wide grin, and exclaimed, "I got a *B* on my re-write!" As soon as she sat down, however, her jubilation waned; she informed me that she got a *D* on her midterm. I was prepared for this scene, though; I had talked to her instructor just an hour before Lisa arrived at the Writing Center.

We spent a good deal of time discussing her midterm. Actually, Lisa did most of the talking; she totally disagreed with her grade. She felt that the reader, who wasn't Lisa's instructor, but rather another teacher in the department, was overly harsh in her comments because Lisa hadn't answered the question the way the reader wanted her to.

I read through the essay with Lisa and showed her how her essay, though it developed a specific point, didn't squarely address the assigned topic. As Lisa explained the link between her point and the essay topic, she realized that she should have stated it explicitly in her paper. Nevertheless, I do agree with Lisa's observation that the reader, who often dismissed Lisa's assertions as being "illogical," was unusually blunt in her comments. I suggested to Lisa that she discuss

the exam with her instructor, who hadn't read it over yet, to get another opinion about the reader's comments.

10/28/80

Although Enrique was depressed about failing his midterm, I read it over and saw a *marked* improvement over his previous in-class essay. I told Enrique this, and to prove my point, pulled out my copy of his first timed writing so we could compare the two. Instead of building his argument on such vague, imprecise expressions as "since the beginning of time," and "man created rules and things," Enrique, on this latest exam, relied on solid factual assertions to convey his point. He even tried to write a suspended paragraph[5] for his introduction, and he kept his grammar errors to a minimum. What was the problem? Enrique summarized the article, "Joey, the Mechanical Boy," instead of analyzing "how language expands, limits, or defines one's world." However, I had spoken to his instructor, who told me that the lack of analysis was a major problem for all of his students.

Because Enrique had to re-write his midterm, we concentrated on developing a new focus for his essay, one that would get him to examine the meanings implicit in the examples he extracted from the article and, instead of merely recounting them, to analyze their relationship to the actual essay topic. The first chore was to revise his thesis. Enrique had failed to commit himself to adopting and defending a position on the topic, so I directed my questions to this end. From our discussion, Enrique was able to produce a thesis with "because" clauses and an outline to guide him as he wrote the paper.[6]

I had been thinking over the weekend about how I was going to tell Jose that I didn't want to work with him any more. This morning, I

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[5] *Random House Handbook*, pp. 105-6.

[6] *Random House Handbook*, pp. 63-4.

cornered a fellow tutor who knew about the problems I was having with Jose and begged her for advice. She reassured me that I wasn't acting selfishly, as neither Jose nor I were profiting from our relationship. Feeling more confident about approaching the matter, I met with Jose.

"How's it going," I asked, trying to sound interested.

"Terrible," Jose replied as he pulled out a pile of corrected papers. As I quickly glanced over them, I felt sensations of guilt and panic wreaking havoc in my stomach. His midterm had been mercilessly covered with red marks and condemned with a bright, fat *D*; another essay also had the cloud of doom, a *D*, hanging over it. Jose was in trouble; he knew it and I knew it. The question for me was, "What am I going to do about it?"

"Buy some time; go over the midterm," I thought to myself. As we read through the exam, I showed him that the reader's comments, though plentiful, were fair and correct. Besides not addressing the topic, Jose's argument was weakened by numerous ungrammatical sentences, which contained fragments and parallel structure, reference, statement, agreement, and tense mistakes which he couldn't afford to make. " tried to dismiss the problems by claiming that he was "under pressu t I pointed out to him that his at home essays were also plagued grammatical errors.

I was at a loss for words; I asked Jose to let me think for a few minutes. I thought that I had resolved this crisis, that I had made my decision. Here I was, though, trying desperately to make sense out of what was happening to both of us. On the one hand, it was so simple: Jose needed, and now wanted, my help. On the other hand, however, I felt as if Jose had dug himself into a hole and was expecting me to throw down the rope and hoist him out. Jose quelled my anxiety attack somewhat when he admitted, "It's my fault, not yours." I then explained to him that it was his performance in the latter half of the course which would more or less determine his final grade in the class. Using a favorite analogy of mine, I told Jose that "This is like the fourth quarter of a basketball game, and your opponent has taken off on a fast

break. You've got to keep running, no matter what." And I wasn't saying this just for him; it applied to me too, because I had resolved then to finish out the quarter with him.

The major task that we accomplished today was to re-establish our goals. We divided the grammar chores as follows: (1) fragments; (2) run-together sentences; (3) reference/tense; (4) coordination; (5) modification; and, (6) parallel structure. Jose *can* write good descriptive and narrative prose but he needs to learn how to write expository essays with thesis statements.

When I think about it, part of Jose's problem, his cocky attitude, comes from the fact that his instructor had created assignments that didn't emphasize what was being done in other Subject A sections, and Jose was simply doing the type of writing he does best. Topics such as "how to wake up at 8:00 in the morning" easily lend themselves to humorously engaging *narrative* papers. Directions such as "write on anything you want" again allow Jose to flex his creative muscles and avoid writing expository prose. Such topics were given for the first half of the course, and then, suddenly, on the third essay and the midterm, Jose was forced to write in a different form, in a new language. For the first time, he had to write and think critically, examining his statements' validity and constructing an argument which would prove their merit. Knowing that his remaining assignments would demand this type of writing, Jose feared that he had too much ground to cover. Although I felt the same way, neither of us could afford to worry about that now.

Later, after a thoroughly invigorating workout in the weight room, I resolved to make the best out of this situation. I'm not going to delude myself into thinking that I have to drag Jose through Subject A; at this point, that is his responsibility. Nor am I going to make a special effort to be his "buddy." But I will give him the best I have.

11/3/80

I spoke to Teresa's instructor last week, gathering information

about Teresa's progress in the class and gleaning some hints about the topic of the upcoming midterm. The instructor feels that Teresa is improving and wants to see us forge ahead, to work on sentence combining and paragraph structure. While he hadn't selected a definite topic for the exam, he told me that he had narrowed it down to a general area, "language and reality." With this in mind, I had asked Teresa to read an article from her text, Aldous Huxley's "Words and Behavior," and to come prepared to write an essay based on a topic from the reader.

I think that today's mock midterm session went better than the last. For one thing I was better organized. I had read most of the assigned articles for this unit on propaganda and persuasion, and I selected questions that, while broad and requiring focus, could be answered in fifty minutes. However, the Writing Center, jammed with people and buzzing with the noisy chatter of writers discussing their work, wasn't the place to create exam conditions. The side stairwell of the building next door seemed better since it was empty and quiet. I left Teresa alone so she could write without the distraction of my presence. I busied myself by reading the essay which she had to re-write. I tossed acorns down a sewer drain. I made a copy of her essay. And Teresa wrote.

At the end of fifty minutes, I asked Teresa how she felt about the paper. While she was confident that her introduction and early body paragraphs were strong, she thought that she had faltered at the essay's end. We decided to review the paper more closely during our next session and I suggested that each of us take a copy of the paper, correct it, and compare notes. We would spend thirty minutes on this, and use the remaining time to review her reading assignments or her re-write.

Two factors prompted me to try this exercise. First of all, I thought that to have Teresa mark her essay would be a way to measure how well she understands her own writing: could she spot her grammar errors? Could she correct them? Her paragraphs--could she detect those that weren't fully developed and those that didn't work to support her

thesis? Did she even have a thesis? Why was her conclusion, as she correctly observed, a weak one? For Teresa to be able to answer those questions is, I feel, critical to her development as a writer and to my weaning her away from me, her tutor--the second reason why I decided to do this. She has to learn to ask such questions herself, and if she can't do that, then I've done nothing but to make her dependent upon me.

Today's session with Lisa was challenging; she had been struck by an acute case of writer's block and couldn't seem to work her way around it. The fact that I didn't know what to do made our discussion even more interesting. During our last session, Lisa had spent the entire hour composing a promising thesis and outline for her essay. But today was Monday, the essay was due Tuesday, and Lisa didn't have a paper.

Lisa's main obstacle was her attitude. Overwrought by anxiety, Lisa knew that she had a potentially fine paper but feared that she couldn't write an essay which would be up to par. I suggested that she do some focused freewriting--jotting down any and all thoughts that were related to the topic; she couldn't bring herself to do that. I decided that we should just talk about the topic to get her to open up, to hear her own ideas, and then to write them on paper. At the hour's end, Lisa felt less tense about her predicament, but she knew that she had to churn out an essay by 10:00 the following morning. I silently debated whether or not to offer her my phone number and an invitation to call me if she found herself unable to work out of her rut. I didn't do it; I can't tutor twenty-four hours a day. Besides, I think that this is something that Lisa needs to work through herself. Though I know it's important for me to give her support and encouragement during a time like this, Lisa must learn to do these very things for herself; teachers, classmates, roommates, and tutors aren't always there when you need them.

However, I had forgotten that I had given Lisa my phone number before, at our first meeting, and she did call me. Rather, she called my parent's house and my mom relayed her message.

"Did she sound desperate?" I asked.

"She kept saying, 'I'm really stuck.' Yeah, I think she's desperate."

"How long ago did she call?"

"Oh, a couple of hours ago. I told her you'd be out late, so...."

I called. I'm glad I caught her two hours past her crisis period because Lisa had calmed down, and she spent most of the ten minutes telling me what she had done and how she had done it.

11/4/80

Enrique spent the entire fifty minutes writing a response to a sample midterm topic given to him by his instructor. After he had finished, I made a copy of the essay and told him that he should review it, underlining his thesis statement and theme sentences, and identifying and correcting his grammar errors. At our next meeting, we would go over the paper together and review the readings for the midterm.

By now, the seventh week of the quarter, it has become all too apparent that Enrique really isn't going to pass Subject A. No matter how hard I try to be "realistic" and "objective" about the situation, it hurts to admit that this is the case. Even worse, I haven't known how to discuss this with Enrique. As fate would have it though, I saw him a few hours after our session and for twenty minutes we discussed the very real possibility of his having to repeat Subject A next quarter. He had just received the re-write of his midterm and got the same grade as he did on his exam, a *D*. I told Enrique that while he certainly has a right to feel discouraged about the grade, if he reads his instructor's comments carefully, he will see that he's making definite improvement. Instead of criticizing Enrique's vague, imprecise prose, his instructor now focuses his attention on Enrique's paragraph structure and development. Enrique no longer makes such grammar errors as run-together sentences and fragments, but has "graduated" to subordination and modification errors, which means, as I told him, that he is trying to discard simplistic sentence patterns for more complex structures.

"You can't master all you need to know in ten weeks," I told him.

"Well, what if I get an *F*?"

I explained to Enrique that though there was a distinct possibility that he wouldn't pass the course, he would receive an "Incomplete" instead of an *F*, which means that he must take the course again next quarter. I encouraged Enrique not to give up, to use this quarter as a preparation for the next. He agreed. I'm glad we had this talk, and that he initiated it, because I was beginning to worry about how I was going to tell him.

11/5/80

Lisa dropped in while I was working with Teresa and told me that she'd rather prepare for her midterm on her own. I think the all-night vigil during which she produced her last essay proved to her that she can compose a solid piece of writing without assistance from either me or her roommates, that she has internalized many of the reader's responses. If it weren't for the fact that I was in the middle of my session with Teresa, I would have discussed with Lisa the possibility of reducing her tutorial time to one hour per week.

During today's session with Teresa, I kept thinking, "I wish I could see this on videotape."[7] I sincerely believe that this was my best effort so far as a tutor.

As we reviewed her mock exam, I deliberately focused our discussion on the larger units of expression, her paragraphs, because I want Teresa to understand how she organizes and develops her argument. We went through the essay, examining each paragraph to see how her sentences shaped them. Teresa is learning how to use suspended and direct

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[7]As part of our training, one or two of our tutorial sessions are videotaped and, together with our supervisors, tutors analyze the results.

paragraphs[8] effectively, and she is creating arguments centered around a clear thesis. I was impressed when Teresa located and revised her grammatical errors, but she couldn't explain to me why the sentences were incorrect. Pulling out a clean sheet of paper, I wrote down each of her jumbled sentences, and by defining her core assertions and identifying s-v-o/c patterns, tried to show her why and how her sentences went awry. Because I know that Teresa didn't fully understand this process, I'll continue doing it for the next couple of sessions. After that, I'll have her do it.

In the last two essays, Teresa has had problems writing solid conclusions, and this paper was no exception. However, it was Teresa who quickly pointed out that her conclusion contradicted her thesis. We discussed what it means to take a "wider" view on a topic and how she could do this in her essay, generating what I felt was a productive, informative discussion of the Huxley essay, the probable basis of her upcoming midterm.

I asked Teresa to compare this midterm preparation to the last one. She was so enthusiastic about this session, felt so much more confident about the actual midterm, that she wants to continue this format--timed writings on Mondays and "review" sessions on Wednesdays--to get ready for the final. She'll have only one more at-home essay, while the rest of the writing will be done in class.

There is a basic "issue" we still need to address: grammar. While I don't mean to deny the tremendous progress that Teresa has made, serious grammatical errors such as subject-verb agreement, predication, and statement errors still surface in her prose, and Teresa doesn't know why she makes these mistakes. Furthermore, it's difficult for me to explain these mistakes to her when she doesn't know many of the parts of speech and their functions. Yet I can't envision spending the next three to four weeks doing only timed writings. First of all, it seems unproductive to lose the first session as she writes for fifty minutes,

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[8] See *Random House Handbook*, pp. 102-3.

something she should do at home but says she doesn't have time for. Secondly, I'm a student too, and preparing topics for these timed writings devours quite a bit of my own study time. More importantly though, I want Teresa to understand why she writes the way she does, and I can't accomplish that given the frantic pace at which the timed writing format would force us to work.

11/13/80

If it's frustrating for me knowing that there's nothing I can do to help Enrique pass Subject A this quarter, I can only imagine how he feels, realizing that, short of writing a flawless final exam, he'll have to repeat the class next quarter. Nevertheless, this Tuesday I spent thirty minutes explaining to Enrique why he wasn't ready to move on to English 1A, becoming exasperated as I tried to defend his instructor's decision to hold Enrique for a second quarter of remedial composition.

"I don't see why he can't just pass me," Enrique complained. "He's just being tight."

Today Enrique's anxiety level was pitched especially high. Because he's receiving financial aid, he's obsessed with maintaining the required GPA, and that means that he has to improve his grades in his other classes, particularly Anthropology. Though he attends his Subject A class "to keep learning," Enrique finds it difficult to motivate himself to do the work because he knows that he's not going to pass anyway and feels that the time spent on writing assignments could be put to more "productive" use in his other courses. Surviving these past nine weeks has certainly been a challenge for him. When we talked about his proposed schedule for next quarter, I realized that it looks no more promising than this term's; he wants to take Anthropology 1, French 5, Math 16A (calculus), and Subject A. I tried to tell Enrique that he needn't burden himself with such difficult workloads. Perhaps I had said too much; I was at a loss for words when, at the end of the session, Enrique began to cry.

I am surprised but pleased at how well things are going with Jose. His newly found willingness to work, coupled with my "let's forget about the first four dismal weeks of the quarter" attitude, has made our working relationship productive. Yet I still feel uncomfortable when I work with Jose. I'm still angry with him, and there are moments when I resent the predicament he's gotten us into. I'm afraid that those weeks we spent doing essentially nothing are going to catch up with us and take a toll on Jose's final grade.

Because his instructor had yet to return Jose's midterm, which we had planned to review, Jose and I discussed how he had structured the essay due today and his plans for his re-write assignment. As I read over his paper, an analysis of the persuasive techniques used in an advertisement promoting a Nautilus weight machine, I asked Jose to explain what he felt were the major strengths and weaknesses of his essay. He correctly pointed out that, while the early body paragraphs contained solid analysis clarified by telling examples, his final two paragraphs buckled under the cumbersome weight of too numerous examples. The only criticism I offered was that his introduction was, in a word, boring. A general discussion of the purpose of advertising didn't move him to his point quickly enough. We discussed what he could have written. For example, by placing the product, the weight machine, in its "social" context, the sudden interest in physical fitness, and by defining the audience targeted by the ad campaign, Jose could've created a more direct, pertinent, and interesting "funnel"[9] to his thesis. However, I didn't want to dwell on picking the paper apart. His instructor will, I hope, do a thorough job of that.

We then moved on to another pressing concern, his next assignment, for which he could rewrite any one of his previous essays.

"Which one do you think you'll do?" I asked.

"The one on politics and persuasion, if I ever get it back."

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[9]See both *The Random House Handbook*, pp. 119-20 and *The Practical Stylist*, pp. 24-5.

He needs the paper by tomorrow because the following day he's going home for the weekend, a trip which he's not looking forward to. Jose dreads returning home • his high school friends, who feel that Jose "betrayed them" because he chose to attend Cal instead of the local junior college. Being practical, I suggest to Jose that while we could talk about some revision strategies for the yet-to-be-returned paper, he shouldn't count on receiving it by tomorrow.

"Well, what do you think I ought to do? My instructor's the one who's holding things up by not giving me the paper." Even though the solution to this predicament was clear to me and probably obvious to Jose, he wanted me to answer his question.

"Why don't you revise one of your essays which required analysis? You could use the opportunity to hone those skills you'll need for the final."

Jose chose to rewrite his ill-fated "World Series" essay. Although he knew what he had to do in the revision (write an analysis, not a narrative), I had to explain to Jose that it was how he approached the topic which had gotten him into trouble. After reading his instructor's comments, Jose realized that what he had said was common knowledge and reluctantly agreed with the instructor's blunt but accurate observation that Jose hadn't offered the reader any new information about the topic. Though he still wanted to write about baseball, Jose knew that he needed a new focus for his paper. What aspect of the national pastime had yet to be worn down by the reporters at *Sports Illustrated*? A topic that finally suggested itself was the small furor that had been raised over the selection of this year's recipient of the Cy Young Award. Jose could easily write an argumentative paper defending his stance that Steve Stone of the Baltimore Orioles deserved the coveted honor over Oakland's Mike Norris. "I could compare their ERA's (earned run averages), complete games pitched, strikeouts...I think I'll talk to my instructor about it."

Before Jose left, we made yet another list of "things to do," this one in preparation for the final exam: next Tuesday (11/18) we'll have

a grammar review and he'll write his mock final at home; Thursday (11/20), we'll review his mock final; the following Tuesday (11/25) will most likely be spent "psyching up" for the final.

11/17/80

As Teresa and I recapped our discussion of her midterm, I was surprised to learn that her instructor had misled the class, and me, about the second midterm exam. I had spoken with him the week prior to the test and had learned that the topic would be "based upon language and reality" and that the focal points would be the "Huxley essay and politics. You know, making the unpalatable palatable." This is precisely what Teresa and I had covered in our sessions and what he had lectured on in class. However, the midterm asked students to apply Huxley's distinction between concrete and abstract language to their reading of a Wilfred Owen poem. The problem for Teresa and her classmates was that they couldn't distinguish between figurative and abstract language. Very few students passed the midterm.

After venting her anger, Teresa was ready to do some work, and I gave her the Subject A grammar quiz from Winter Quarter, 1979. After she completed the exam, we reviewed it together. Even though Teresa has progressed in her ability to pick out incorrect sentences, both in grammar quizzes and in her own writing, she still can't pinpoint the grammatical clunker in the flawed sentences. I stressed to Teresa that naming the error was less important than knowing when a sentence was ungrammatical. And Teresa proved me right; she scored fourteen out of seventeen on the quiz.

As she was gathering her belongings to leave, I gave Teresa a copy of the mock final I had devised which required her to analyze the style of a paragraph from E.B. White's "Some Remarks on Humor." When I nonchalantly asked Teresa how she was doing in her other classes, I learned to my great surprise that she's transferring to San Francisco State next quarter. Financial aid problems are making it difficult for her to stay at Berkeley; she's caught in the paradoxical trap of receiving no

financial assistance from her parents, yet being ineligible for aid because they make too much money. While at San Francisco State, where the tuition is less than at Berkeley and the campus is closer to her home in Daly City, Teresa plans to take a reduced study load and work part-time. I felt both hurt and angry because I had come to care about Teresa not just as a struggling writer, but as a person as well. We shared a lot in common, primarily a love for competitive sports and a deep sense of loss for giving them up now that we are in college. That the results of her financial aid evaluation didn't reflect the reality of her situation upset me; that she was leaving Berkeley because of financial, not academic, problems enraged me. I regained my composure quickly and told Teresa that I would miss her.

I encouraged her to map out her plans with her EOP counselor[10] in order to ensure herself a smooth, trouble-free transition.

Lisa and I discussed the source of the writing block she experienced as she composed her previous essay, and her explanation of this episode, and others like it, confirmed my original suspicions. When she knows that she has a potentially "juicy paper," Lisa "freezes up" because she's afraid that her writing won't do justice to the topic. On her most recent paper, however, she "didn't worry about it" and, as a result, wrote a *fine* rough draft.

However, Lisa flounders on her in-class writing, and especially on her midterms. Her major problem here is that she relies heavily on abstract language. Although she has a solid grasp of what a thesis statement is supposed to do and includes one in each essay she writes, Lisa hides her argument behind a smoke screen of pretentious language, blurring or sometimes even leaving out major points which would link

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[10]The Student Learning Center not only houses the Writing Center, but also serves as the hub for the campus' Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOP/AA) programs. Teresa and other Third World and/or economically disadvantaged students are eligible to receive counseling and other vital services through the EOP/AA component.

her argument to the assigned topic. Because she can't afford to make this mistake on her final exam, I'm groping for more substantive hints than "use concrete language," more direct strategies to help Lisa clear up the vagueness in her writing. I'm also afraid that her instructor isn't emphasizing analysis of style, which will be the topic of the final exam; the class is still working on propaganda.

11/18/80

For his next assignment, Enrique has the option either to analyze three passages for their style, or to rewrite his last midterm. Probably reasoning that his job would be somewhat easier if he didn't have to produce entirely new ideas around which to build a paper, Enrique chose to revise his exam. However, I wasn't willing to let him avoid the other assignment entirely because he needed the practice for the final. So, we decided to use it as the mock final which he would write for next Tuesday (11/25). On Thursday (11/20), we'd review the rough draft of his final assignment due Friday. For that paper I asked him to underline his thesis and theme sentences, locate the sentences which he felt weren't "right," and write, on a separate sheet of paper, two sentences in which he felt he had properly used subordination and modification.

11/19/80

Teresa and I spent the first half of our session discussing her mock final. Because the passage I had given her, a paragraph from E.B. White's "Some Remarks on Humor," was straightforward in its content, I thought that she could focus her attention more fully on White's craft, looking at what he was doing with his tone, diction, and sentence patterns. Like her second midterm, though, Teresa's essay faltered because of her basic unfamiliarity with figurative language. She concentrates on the denotation rather than the connotation of metaphors and, as a result, often misreads an author's intent. In addition,

Teresa has yet to internalize her instructor's lectures and our discussions on style. I glanced over her lecture notes and noticed that while she had jotted down key categories such as "logic," "clarity," "organization," and "tone," she hadn't written down explanations of those concepts. Recalling that *Process and Thought in Composition* has a thorough yet concise chapter on style stocked with terminology, definitions, and examples, I told Teresa that I would have it xeroxed, and that, for our next session, she should re-write the essay, utilizing the concepts in her lecture notes and this additional reading.

11/25/80

My final tutoring sessions weren't as productive as I thought they would be. With each of my students, I allotted two weeks to prepare for the final: the first, to review grammar and discuss their remaining papers, and the second, to critique a mock final whose topic was similar to that of the exam, stylistic analysis. Yet Teresa and Jose were the only students who chose to get some extra practice by writing the exam, and they didn't gain a significant advantage over Lisa and Enrique. Despite discussing with them the mock exam and reviewing a handout that I had compiled of "helpful hints" for writing prose analysis and comparison/contrast essays, I felt that all four of them were neither comfortable with nor knowledgeable about the final exam topic.

Most of their assignments had required them to analyze the content, rather than the structure, of an article. While the unit on propaganda had introduced them to various rhetorical devices used in political writings and speeches, and while the essay topics for this portion of the course had demanded that they critically examine how those techniques are employed, the students hadn't been asked, as they would be on the final, to scrutinize the smaller, more aesthetic qualities of prose, such as diction, sentence structure, and tone. Besides, I know that Teresa, Jose, Enrique, and Lisa aren't used to analyzing a paragraph, such a small chunk of writing, for, of all things, its form. I know that I should've concentrated on this last week, but it was

difficult to do, especially when their final assignment focused on propaganda.

It was no surprise to me when, as we discussed the E.B. White passage, their initial curiosity turned to fear as they discovered how little they actually knew about analyzing "good writing." Each of them knew that they had to address this topic and that to pass the course they must pass the final exam.

"This all seems so silly...sentence structure," Lisa complained as she doodled on her copy of the mock exam.

"I'm going to flunk the final exam," Enrique predicted solemnly. "I know it."

The question each of them hurled at me, "Do *you* think I'll pass the final?" was hard to field. I tried to turn it around by asking them to answer their own question. Of the four, Teresa was the most optimistic, believing that if she wrote an essay of the same caliber as her speech analysis paper, which had received a *C+*, she would pass the exam. Jose, however, was frightened: "My teacher told us that twenty-five percent of us wouldn't pass. Now I'm scared." While each student was trying to psyche up for the exam in his/her own way, all needed encouragement. I responded with genuine sympathy, for I had been in similar predicaments before, on a basketball court. Winning a game often comes down to playing hard and furiously during those last eight minutes. The previous three quarters of play had to be forgotten because we had to concentrate on the tasks which had to be done *now*.

"It's the same thing here, too. You've got to think positive," I exhorted. "You can do it...go get 'em...." I hoped that they didn't think I was saying this just to calm them down; I really believed that each of them could write a passing exam. Still, I felt helpless in that there was nothing else I could do. At this point, encouragement was all I could give them, and, while that was important, it seemed as if that wasn't enough. For some reason I equated my worth as a tutor with the number of students who would pass a course with my assistance. The three hours Teresa, Jose, Enrique, and Lisa would spend writing the

final exam had consequences for me, too. If they didn't pass...ten weeks of work now came down to one night, and I was almost as scared as they were.

The farewells weren't sentimental. No one shed any tears and no gifts were exchanged. Instead, they were nicely informal, and the conversation covered a wide range of topics: available options for their next required composition course, a "seasoned sophomore's" advice on scheduling, and progress reports on their performances in their other classes. (Teresa had received an *A-* in math!) In general, I found it difficult to get them to summarize what they felt they had learned this quarter. Because I didn't want to compel them to talk about something which obviously wasn't a pressing concern to them, I just let the discussion wander. With Enrique, however, the discussion was more serious because I told him that I wanted to work with him again next quarter, whether he passed Subject A or not, and he spent a lot of time talking about his home life.

I'm not a sentimental person by nature, so I find it difficult to say goodbye to people, especially people I care about. While phrases like "...goodbye...I've really enjoyed working with you...remember, you can still come back for tutoring...good luck on the final...have a good vacation..." may have sufficed, there was still much more I wanted to say, but didn't because I couldn't find the words.

12/1/80

For two hours I had been writing what I knew was an *A* qualit essay for the final exam in my Ethnic Studies class, and afterwards I felt ecstatic as I walked over to the Student Learning Center to finish a few administrative chores that had to be taken care of before I left for the holidays. No sooner had I jogged into the Writing Center, explained to my supervisor why I was so jubilant, before she informed me that the results of the Subject A final exam were available for my perusal.

"Can I look at them on Friday?" I asked. "I'll be through with

my finals by then."

To discover which of my students did and did not pass the course was to me unsettling, and I would have preferred to learn this information at some other time. Obviously knowing that I was overreacting, my supervisor told me the news anyway: Teresa and Lisa had passed; Enrique and Jose hadn't.

While the pairings came somewhat as a surprise to me, for I had hoped that Jose could have written a passing exam, I wasn't as unnerved as I thought I would be. When I remember Teresa explaining to me her method of revision (an act she had'nt performed purposely before), Lisa coming in with rough drafts that had been previously read by at least two other people (a result of her growing confidence in herself as a thinker and writer), Jose pointing out the strengths and weaknesses in his paper's argument and development (a skill he had honed quickly once he decided it was worth the effort), and Enrique writing paragraphs that were centered around one, not five, topics and directed toward supporting his thesis (an important accomplishment for him), I realized that I simply can't be concerned with numbers, my "success rate" as a tutor. In fact, I'm not at all disappointed that neither Enrique nor Jose passed Subject A because I know that they, along with Teresa and Lisa, learned something more about themselves and their writing during the course of the quarter. And that's what matters to me anyway.

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Two quarters have passed, and while I've worked with a number of students since then, I haven't had another group of students quite like Lisa, Enrique, Jose, and Teresa. Fun, frustrating, exciting, draining, but ultimately, satisfying are words that color my thoughts when I recall my experience working with them. Teresa is now attending school across the Bay at San Francisco State University, and I have neither seen nor spoken to her since November. But, on a campus populated by some 30,000 students, I somehow manage to run into Lisa, Jose, and Enrique quite

often. Lisa is doing what I knew she was always capable of: writing *A* papers. She has done nothing but improve. A clear, strong personal voice makes her prose striking and her ideas so rich; what's better is that I think she knows this herself. My meetings with Jose have been brief in duration as we always seem to catch each other in some doorway, one entering, the other leaving. He passed Subject A his second time around and seems to be headed toward a major in the physical and/or biological sciences. But of the three, I've seen Enrique most often, and of him I'm especially proud. He repeated Subject A and, without any tutorials to supplement his classwork, passed the course, receiving a *B* on his final exam. Self-reliant is what Lisa, Enrique, Jose, and Teresa discovered they could be, and indeed, they are.

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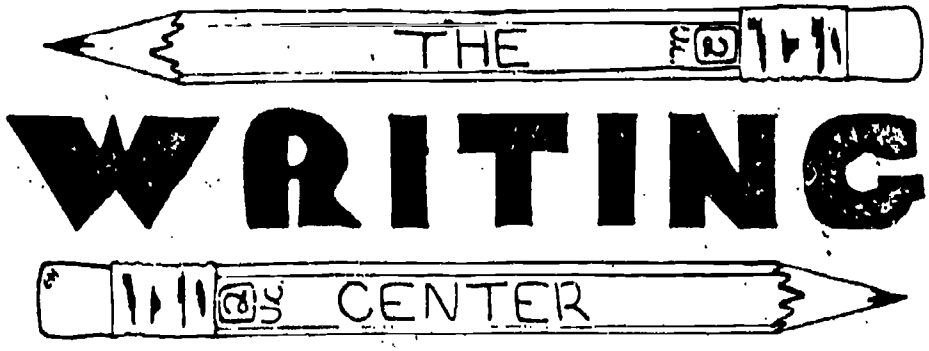
Appendix

Information Sheets for
Students and Tutors
at the Writing Center
Student Learning Center
University of California, Berkeley



Student Learning Center
Building T-8

University of California, Berkeley
642-7332

Dear Student,

Welcome to the Writing Center. Like hundreds of other CAL students you've come here to improve your writing. But before you see a tutor, perhaps you'd like to know more about us. Most of the tutors are students who are qualified writers. They are either juniors, seniors, or graduates, and they tutor for academic credit, for pay, or as volunteers. The tutors are selected and trained by a core staff of experienced writing instructors.

What can you expect from a tutor? Basically, you can expect friendly, competent assistance in learning to write by writing. A tutor will work with you while you prepare a paper for a course, or while you work on a writing project of any kind. The tutor will go over a returned paper with you and explain and interpret the instructor's comments, offering constructive suggestions so that you can make your next paper better. If you need to work on grammar, the tutor will show you how you can improve your understanding of sentence structure and usage through practice with handouts and/or computer assisted instructional programs. In short, a tutor will work with you at your level and at your pace to help you meet both the demands of academic writing and the standards of good, clear, concise prose. We would like to help you to write convincingly and in a style that you'll be proud of.

What will a tutor expect from you? Conscientious effort is the main ingredient of a successful tutorial. We've listed your responsibilities on the other side of this handout, and a tutor will expect that you've read "How to Get The Most Out of Tutoring." These guidelines will help you derive the greatest benefits from our services.

Sincerely,

The Tutors and Staff of The Writing Center

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF TUTORING

KEEP YOUR APPOINTMENTS

If you're going to be more than 15 minutes late or if you can't make it at all, please call 642-7332 and let us know as far in advance as possible. Your tutor, the reception staff, and other students will appreciate this courtesy from you.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

1. You have the right to cancel or reschedule appointments without explanation so long as you notify us as soon as possible.
2. You have the right to change tutors at any time and for any reason whatsoever.
3. You have a right to expect your tutor to arrive on time, to keep all scheduled appointments, and to give you his/her full attention for the time scheduled.
4. You have a right to confidentiality.

DON'T COUNT ON DROP-IN

As the quarter progresses, most writing tutors' schedules fill up with appointments for their regular students. To ensure that you get the amount of time you want, always make advance appointments.

WORK REGULARLY WITH THE SAME TUTOR

A tutor will be happy to set up a schedule of regular appointments with you, as many as you need. Be sure to exchange home phone numbers with your tutor for future reference in case of cancellations, changes, emergencies, etc.

COME PREPARED

1. Do your homework.
2. Bring the relevant assignments, papers, or books. Tutors have no way of knowing what's going on in your course unless you tell them.
3. Bring your notes, outlines, drafts, and returned papers. A tutor needs to know how the instructor is evaluating your work in order to help you meet that teacher's expectations. By the same token, the tutor can learn a lot from looking at the rough notes or drafts for a paper you're writing. Don't hesitate to show a tutor your work in progress; remember that tutors don't give grades!

CONCENTRATE ON DOING WRITING

Actively participate in your tutoring session by taking notes, writing outlines, sentences, paragraphs, or whatever your tutor asks you to write. Remember that tutors will not do your thinking or your writing for you.

COOPERATE WITH YOUR TUTOR

Tutors know about many approaches to writing and many resources on campus that enhance learning. If you are open to their suggestions and willing to try new techniques, you will be surprised at what you can accomplish. However, the tutor is not a miracle worker. In the final analysis it is your effort and willingness to cooperate that will contribute most to your success. As one student wrote when evaluating the Writing Center: "I expected to have the paper proofread or edited by some English scholar while I sat back; I was glad that I ended up going through the paper with the person who helped me. That way I learned something that I could use in my next writing assignment."

GOAL-SETTING FOR WRITING TUTORS

You sit there, staring at your student. Your student sits there, staring back at you. So. What to do for the next nine weeks? Now is a good time to do a little planning, set a few carefully considered goals--for this session, for next session, for the rest of the quarter. Setting goals will give both you and the student a sense of direction, a sense of expectancy, a sense of accomplishment as you achieve one goal and move on to the next. The student should become more motivated, feel more in control of what's going on, for, with your guidance, she will frame the plan of action.* You both will know what to expect from each other, what sort of commitment you are willing to make. But, more importantly, goal-setting will compel you, as a tutor, to be aware of why you do what you do. You'll have to sharpen your diagnostic skills (determining what needs to be done), develop teaching strategies (how to go about doing it), and acquire evaluation techniques (deciding when you've completed it). Here are a few points to keep in mind about goal-setting:

APPROACH: You and your student already have a way of setting goals, although you're probably not all that conscious of it. You aim to have her pass the course, or the midterm, or the next paper. So you spend your time discussing the reading material, going over all the mistakes on the student's last paper, all the mistakes on her rough draft for the next assignment. What's wrong with that? Nothing, except the approach you're taking isn't giving you the information you need to do an effective job. Rather than determining what skills(goals) are necessary to attain the desired outcome (the passing paper, for instance), you operate only in terms of that outcome, trying to cover everything in hopes of hitting whatever it is that's causing the problem. It's better to focus on a few problem areas, dealing with these exclusively, and let the tests and grades gauge your progress. That's what they're for, anyhow.

PRIORITIES: Together with your student, go through a list of goals that you've brainstormed, labeling each item either "A", "B", or "C", according to which you think will require the most work--and don't have more than two or three A's, B's, or C's. As you perceive the need, you'll move your C's to B's, your B's to A's, and your A's down to B's or even C's. Say, for instance, your student has made a subordination error in a paper that was just returned to her. Rather than spend the rest of the session going over subordination, make a note of the error

*You and your student should consider enlisting the aid of her instructor, or your supervisor when setting goals for the quarter.

and file it away with the C's. Two such errors in one paper, and subordiantion may move to a B. Ten or more, and it becomes top priority, while an A item that she might be doing well on moves down to a B, at least temporarily. The idea is to set priorities, but to be ready to shift them.

OUTLINING/MAPPING: You'll want to outline or map out your goals for several reasons: (a) to group together related goals; (b) to orient yourself within the goal area; (c) to divide a general goal into several specific ones so that you may assign an appropriate activity to each. For instance, on your goals list, you have "grammar, thesis statements, test-taking skills, agreement rules.". Work this material into a more practical form:

1. "Test-taking skills" is too broad; you must split it into smaller categories to pinpoint where the problem lies.

2. "Thesis statements" you should assign to a more general category--say, "organization"--so you can see where it fits into the overall picture.

3. "Agreement rules" you should group under "grammar"

4. "Grammar" you must break down to a level where you can translate goals into specific activities. (See diagram.)

SCHEDULING: Don't wince; if you're at all serious about setting goals, you must devise some system of planning that suits your needs. By forcing you to commit yourself--at least tentatively--scheduling will make your goals seem real enough to merit an attempt. It will save you time that you would waste fithering about what to do next, and it will help you to devote that time to worthwhile, top-priority activities. The time you spend schedulint should pay off in more productive tutoring sessions. The idea, though, isn't to cram an activity into every spare second, but to put your sessions to the best possible use; not to tutor more efficiently, perhaps, but more effectively.

THE GOAL SETTING PROCESS

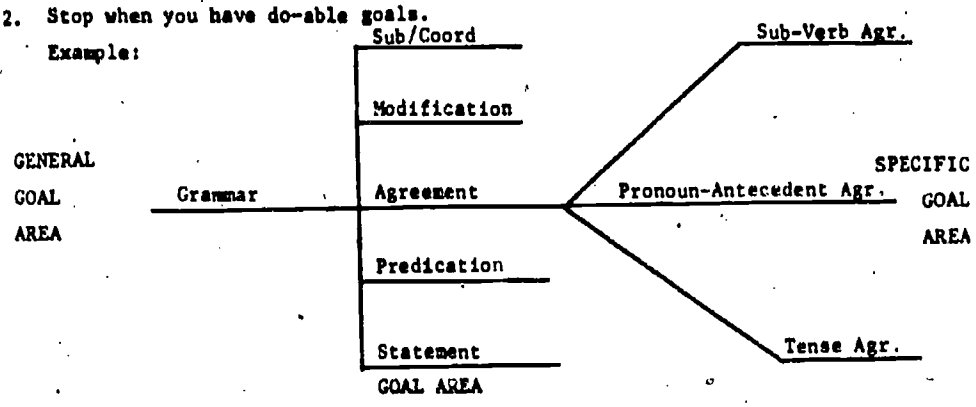
BRAINSTORMING

1. List as many goals as you can think of.
2. Set priorities (ABC method).
3. Label top three A-goals A-1, A-2, A-3. Brainstorm activities for each.
4. Pick about twelve activities--four from each list that you (and, more importantly, your student) are willing to commit yourselves to for at least five minutes in the coming weeks.

OUTLINING/MAPPING

1. Break down goals from general to specific.
2. Stop when you have do-able goals.

Example:



CRITIQUE--for each goal-directed activity, ask:

1. Goal--What skill are we aiming for?
   --What specific subject area are we dealing with?
2. Strategy--What are we going to do to achieve goal?
   For instance:
   --tutor lecture
   --handouts--ready-made or tutor prepared
   --tutor-assigned readings (as a model--like Orwell for essay-writing--or as explication or clarification of an issue in writing--something from one of the Subject A readers, perhaps).
3. Evaluation--How will we know when skill has been acquired?
   --What task will student have to perform to demonstrate that goal has been achieved?
   --What level of success are we shooting for? Should task be performed 100% correctly? 75%? 50%?

THE GOAL-SETTING PROCESS (CONT'D)

SCHEDULING

1. Master schedule--at beginning of quarter, schedule for entire quarter. (You might want to use one of those long, yellow, tutor schedule sheets. For example, have each square represent one 1-hour session. Allowing two sessions a week for eight weeks, block off a section of sixteen squares--your student's tutoring time for the quarter).

2. Weekly supplement--a running list of ideas for activities, needs that come up. To be worked into master schedule.

3. Daily to-do list--to be drawn up during first ten minutes of session.
   --Write down activities decided on.
   --Cross out items as you complete them; add new ones that you cover.
   --Save as a record of what you went over during that session.

SOURCES:

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Susan L. Salkind
June 12, 1980

ON NOT DOING A STUDENT'S HOMEWORK

Attitudes

Giving in to a student's pleas for "the answer" is detrimental for him/her in the long run. It robs the student of a sense of self-achievement and independence, and teaches him dependency and manipulation.

Concern about what the student thinks of you can interfere with what the student needs. That is, preservation of a liberal, do-gooder image is less important than the student learning self-sufficiency.

Goal: Student feeling that he learned a lot and did it himself.

Methods

Start Small: Use "success-assured" activities.

Ask the student how he would begin or approach the problem if he had confidence.

Ignore the student's actions or statements of anxiety regarding getting the answer. Interrupt negative comments with a question about the problem.

Repeatedly return his attention to the necessary steps he must take.

Ask the student to build on what he does know about the question or problem.

Resist answering the question, "Is this right?" Suggest that the student find a way to check the answer himself.

Praise the student for small, independent steps.

Yield

1. The student learns that it's O.K. not to have an instant answer.

   He learns this through your acceptance of his pace of doing things. He learns this through your refusal to let anxiety pressure you into giving the right answer. He learns this through watching how you persevere at returning to a step-by-step process. In essence, the learning assistant (tutor) serves as a model of patient perseverance, communicating that the process is more important than the answer.

2. The student develops greater patience with himself, and lessens his anxiety.

   He learns that becoming anxious no longer works as a way of getting the answer. He learns from observing you that you are patient and accepting of his pace.

3. The student is given the opportunity to experience a sense of achievement and confidence.

   He learns this through breaking the problem into small, doable tasks rather than anxiously hoping for an immediate answer to the whole problem. Other, less accepting or patient people may have never tolerated his pace of solving problems. They may have robbed him of the chance of achieving for himself at his own rate.

Neil Fiore, Ph.D.

TUTORING TYPOLOGY

This typology can help you to increase your awareness of your individual tutoring style. Keep in mind that there is no absolute right or wrong in teaching, but rather a variety of methods and approaches which can be adapted to each learning situation. The "right" style is the one that you and your student find the most productive for the particular course or subject at hand. After you rate yourself, date and keep this handout: later, at another time, in another situation, with other types of students, rate yourself again and note how your style has changed.

RATE EACH ITEM ON THE FOLLOWING SCALE: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Unlike Me Like Me

NOTE: Some categories overlap and you may give the same rating to more than one style. Use a plus or minus sign to indicate fine distinctions. It might be helpful to think of your work with a particular student or course.

EXPERT (Rating:___)

I supply my students with a lot of facts in the subject I am tutoring. I am confident in my knowledge and I feel that most of what I tell my tutees will prove valuable to them.

GUIDE (Rating:___)

I am a good listener and I ask many questions. I want my students to learn how to think for themselves, but I also need to know what they're thinking if I'm to help them.

SCHOLAR (Rating:___)

I like explaining my subject to students because in the process I am also explaining it to myself. I learn a great deal from my discussions with students, and, since my subject fascinates me, I feel that this content-oriented interaction is a very rewarding feature of being a tutor.

MENTOR (Rating:___)

I talk openly about my own experiences, views, and aspirations in hopes of establishing trust and rapport with tutees. By getting to know each of my tutees as well as possible, I can build a personal relationship that will be productive for both of us. Since education is a lifelong pursuit that involves the whole person, I try to make connections between the school and the outside world.

ACADEMIC ADJUNCT (Rating:___)

My job is to help students pass the course, and that's what we work on together. I tell students what the university expects of them, and I support the instructor and the curriculum in any way I can. Essentially I try to align the student's abilities with the instructor's expectations.

MEDIC (Rating:___)

I don't want to see anyone fail, and I do everything in my power, short of doing the person's work, to get someone through a course. All of my tutees deserve as much of my energy, knowledge, and time as I can give them.

COUNSELOR (Rating:___)

I am a "friend in need" to my tutees. Whenever we can we meet in a restaurant or other convivial social atmosphere. It is more important to be the kind of person who can give moral support to students than to know everything about the subject matter.

PSYCHOLOGIST (Rating:___)

Many students block on the material and I help them to identify the underlying emotional problems and bring them to the surface where they can be dealt with. Inner conflicts are a common cause of learning difficulties.

REFEREE (Rating:___)

I tutor a lot more than just course material. I help tutees learn both the essential skills in their disciplines and the broader skills they need to be effective learners. There are a lot of things that you need to know in order to survive as a student, and you won't learn about them in any course.

ADVOCATE (Rating:___)

I am on the student's side, and if I have to disagree with the instructor or the institution I will. Sometimes the problem is in the course, r r the student.

****

Your supervisor can give you more information about each style. If there are any characteristics of your tutoring style which are not categorized above, list them below for future reference:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

_____ _____

name date

Acknowledgements: I wish to thank the many student tutors who have contributed their ideas and words to these descriptions, and, for their encouragement and criticism, I am also indebted to the staff of the Student Learning Center.

Thom Hawkins
Copyright 1977

Student Learning Center
University of California
Berkeley

PERSONAL CHECKLIST OF TUTORING SKILLS

LISTENING - I try to be an attentive listener by practicing the following techniques:

	Infrequently	Sometimes	Most of the Time
1. I use the following non-verbal signals to indicate that I am actively interested in what the student is saying:			
a) Regular eye contact	1	2	3
b) Smiling, nodding, and other expressions or gestures that signal my concentration and receptiveness.	1	2	3
c) Concerned body posture, free of distractions.	1	2	3
2. I avoid interrupting, even for the purposes of clarification, until a student has completed his/her message.	1	2	3
3. In order to indicate trust in the tutee's abilities to make thoughtful judgments, I allow a period of calm silence (wait time) after a student has apparently finished talking. In this way I can avoid cutting off a tutee's statements, and provide enough time for reflection and self-criticism.	1	2	3
4. I give my full attention to what the student is saying by:			
a) Taking notice of how the student is delivering his/her message, including non-verbal cues.	1	2	3
b) While the student is talking, I am thinking chiefly about what he/she is saying, not revealing on my own thoughts on the topic or planning my next brilliant statement.	1	2	3
c) I frame my response in the content of the student's experience, not my own.	1	2	3
5. I encourage a student to answer his/her own questions, or at least to try to answer them.	1	2	3
6. To check my understanding of what the student has said, I briefly paraphrase the tutee's idea(s) in my own words.	1	2	3
7. Using the following techniques, I ask questions in a manner that stimulates thinking and reveals a student's strengths and weaknesses:			
a) I avoid verbosity and make my questions brief but specific.	1	2	3
b) I don't overwhelm my student with too many questions.	1	2	3
c) On the average, I wait more than five seconds between asking a question and saying something myself.	1	2	3
d) I avoid answering my own questions.	1	2	3
e) I balance my questions between the open/closed type, and between the socratic/discovery type.	1	2	3
f) The intention of my questions is to enlighten, not to intimidate.	1	2	3

EXPLAINING - I try to give clear explanations by practicing the following techniques:

	Infrequently	Sometimes	Most of the Time
1. Since I don't want to do all the talking (or the work!), I give short explanations with appropriate examples or demonstrations, then I ask the student to perform a task which will help me measure his/her grasp of the concept or skill.	1	2	3
2. In addition to my examples, I also ask students to provide examples after they have understood my explanation.	1	2	3
3. I am cautious about giving prescriptive advice based on my own experience because I am aware that my student's background may be considerably different from mine.	1	2	3
4. I observe my student's learning habits and structure my teaching approach to his/her needs.	1	2	3
5. Whenever possible I model a useful behavior rather than give a long explanation.	1	2	3
6. When it comes to learning/teaching, I am suspicious of all panaceas and flat yes or no answers.	1	2	3
7. Once I identify a tutee's typical learning style, I point out his/her strengths and weaknesses in the hope that the student will become more aware of how he/she learns best.	1	2	3
8. I delay my correction of a "wrong answer" so that I can first question my own preconceptions. (There may be another way which I've never considered to look at the issue, and it may be more important for me to understand why a student answered the way he did. Sometimes, with enough wait time, a student may self-correct.	1	2	3

SUMMARY

1. I try to make each tutoring session a joint effort with at least 50% of the work coming from my student.	1	2	3
2. I find out what my student already knows, I discover what he needs to know, and then I show him how to learn what he needs to know in a way that best suits his individual learning style.		2	3
3. I try to concentrate on real learning and self-improvement, not just on earning better grades. (I am aware that certain types of growth are not measured by grades.)	1	2	3

Subject A Department
University of California
Berkeley

INSTRUCTORS' GUIDE TO MARKING SYMBOLS AND GRAMMATICAL TERMS

AGENT Clarity suffers because a verb form has no expressed subject, or a confusing subject. The use of passive verbs often gives rise to problems with agents. 1. Sometimes the agent is not indicated by the writer, and the reader may infer any of several: "If the evaluation is questioned, another authority must be consulted" (questioned by whom? consulted by whom?). Correction: Change sentence from passive to active. See *PASSIVE*. 2. Sometimes the agent indicated is simply impossible: "Experimentation is necessary for all hypotheses wishing acceptance by the scientific community" (can hypotheses wish anything?). See also *STATEMENT*. (Agentless passives are acceptable when the writer wishes to place emphasis on what happened to the subject rather than on who did it; they are useful and proper in scientfic prose.)

AGREEMENT 1. Subject-verb agreement: "Different dialects reflects different realities." 2 Pronoun-antecedent agreement: "When I express my thoughts to another person, they will hear the tone of my voice." See also *REFERENCE*.

CHOPPY Primer prose made up of short, usually declarative statements: "Man has slipped into an educational cesspool. He has allowed his standard for education to fall. He has accepted news summaries instead of news stories. He reads best sellers that sell because they are shallow, easy reading. He accepts slanted television stories and newspaper articles as truth. He has lost his desire about the relationships among the ideas expressed. Correction: Introduction of transitional words, and some coordination and subordination.

CLARITY A vagueness that interferes with comprehension, but does not prevent it completely. Less serious than *MEANING* or *COHERENCE*. Often can be attributed to a *WRONG WORD*, a poor *WORD CHOICE*, *WORDINESS*, or *VAGUE DICTION*.

COHERENCE The last resort. When you have done your best to detect meaning in a sentence (by substituting words, adjusting structures, and so on), but the sense still eludes you, you may resort to this mark: "It is possible to have a person with natural writing ability and have that same person totally unable to share his talent due to his inability to express his talent in writing"; "Man has found reasonings to countless of nature's providings." WARNING: Be sure that you are not misled into labeling a complex idea as incoherent: "If there are more trees in the world than there are leaves on any one tree, then there must be at least two trees with the same number of leaves." Coherent, but difficult.

COMPARISON 1. Most faulty comparisons try to compare items that cannot be compared: "Mary has a punch like a boy" (can a punch be like a boy?). 2. Some faulty comparisons involve structural errors: "Writing comes more natural to some people as math does to others" (see *MIXED CONSTRUCTION*). 3. Incomplete comparisons express only half of a comparison: "A well-written paper is easier to understand" (than what?); "A woman with a college education is often better able to assist her young children in school" (better than who?). Possible corrections for incomplete comparisons: (a) take adjective or adverb out of the comparative form: "A well-written paper is easy to understand"; or (b) complete the comparison: "A well-written paper is easier to understand than is a poorly organized series of ungrammatical statements."

COORDINATION 1. The misuse of a coordinator--*but* for *and*, for example. 2. The use of coordination when subordination is needed: "This is a book that everyone should read, and it reveals something about human nature" (*because* it reveals . . . ?). 3. The coordination of clauses that are not logically sequential or coordinate: "The Supreme Court said yesterday it will again study the question of what is obscene and how far states can go in aiding parochial schools"; "He went to court in great nervousness and his new suit"; "Television bombards us with hundreds of products and the miracles and happiness these products will give us." This form of the error is more usually treated as a problem in *PARALLELISM*.

DANGLING MODIFIER A modifying element--a single word, a phrase, or sometimes a whole clause (though clauses dangling are frequently errors of *SUBORDINATION*)--does not have a referent within the sentence: "Creativity must be systematized using rehearsed procedure"; "With a wandering mind and a little imagination, ideas could be composed into a little story"; "When starting to do the job, nothing was planned at all." Note that a passive verb in the main clause frequently leads to dangling modifiers.

FACT Although the grammar and even the logic of the essay may be impeccable, the whole point is lost because some basic fact is *wrong*: "When Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravity in the reign of Elizabeth I . . . "; "As Nixon said in his Checkers speech, 'You won't have Dick Nixon to kick around any more'"; "There are 300 women in the State of California who don't know why or how they're having babies"; "George III, known in America as George Washington, . . ."

FRAGMENT 1. A sentence lacking a subject, a verb, or a necessary complement: "Good meaning able to acquire grades that are above average" (no finite verb). 2. A sentence introduced by a subordinating conjunction, but lacking a main clause: "Although being able to write well also helps one to think more logically." NOTE: By the end of the quarter students may use an occasional rhetorical fragment for emphasis, but this is a trick not to be condoned while the student is still obviously groping for a sense of what a sentence is.

GRAMMAR Error in grammatical form or choice of form:

1. Error in pronoun case: "Between you and I . . ."
2. Incorrect verb form: "He use to do that." (see also *TENSE* and *AGREEMENT*.)
3. Adjective used for adverb (or vice versa): "He learned to write very efficient."
4. Noun for adjective (or other confusion of parts of speech): "He is very prejudice"; "Through writing, one can become better knowledged of exposition."
5. *Like* and *as* used incorrectly: "He did it like I did."
6. *It's* (it is or it has) used for *its*, or vice versa: "The dog bit it's tail."
7. Misuse or omission of possessive apostrophe: "It's her's, not Jims."
8. Omission of possessive form before gerund: "John failing surprised me."

IDIOM Misuse of items of language that are determined not by logic, but simply by usage, like vocabulary. Idioms must be memorized by non-native speakers. Errors of this type are hard to explain, especially to the student who can write: "Speaking for myself, I feel that I am learned of the english language sufficient to communicate or survive in this world." Such errors, however, do not have to be explained. They are wrong in the same way that a misspelled word is wrong: absolutely. Idiom errors include:

1. Incorrect use of prepositions: "The teacher's enjoyment *for* the language" (enjoyment *of*, or enthusiasm *for*); "I insist *for* going" (*on* going).
2. Incorrect use of articles: "Language not the bread is staff of life." "Ireland is the island." "He stepped on an accelerator and sped past the car ahead."
3. Wrong choice of gerund or infinitive as second verb or after a verbal form: "They cause women breaking away from their role . . ." (to break); "Tertan was unable *of using* language" (to use).
4. Changes or inaccuracies in proverbs or standard expressions: "The law of dimished returns" (*diminishing*).

IMAGE The picture created in the reader's mind is far from being the one that the writer intended to convey: "Language is merely a tool for communication, and everyone should be free to handle his own tool in a way which he considers to be proper and decent." "Being able to write well helps one to think more logically and also to eliminate waste."

JARGON The use of pseudo-technical vocabulary and style in non-technical settings. The writer usually intends thus to make his statements sound more "scientific" or otherwise authoritative. Clear signs of jargon:

1. Needless and excessive use of the passive voice: "It is understood that . . ."

2. Heavy reliance on the verb "to be" to the exclusion of other verbs.
3. Constant use of nouns as modifiers (and avoidance of adjectives): "Consideration of industry mobility indicator factors . . ."
4. Use of vapid, etiolated key words in interchangeable (and often meaningless) permutations: *aspect, factor, facet, area*, and so on.
5. Misused technical vocabulary: *schizophrenia, parameters*, and *interface* for *indecisiveness, boundaries*, and *point of contact*.

K--AWKWARD Markers should use this symbol mostly as a modifier (*K MOD, K COORD*, and so on). It indicates that, although the structure is correct by the letter of grammatical law, it could be a lot more felicitous: "The assumption of the illiteracy of poor spellers is usually made by middle-class educated people." (Passive constructions frequently lead to awkward sentences.)

LOGIC Before labeling an error as one of logic, pinpoint to your own satisfaction the nature of the logical error. (Students are quick to challenge criticism of their reasoning processes; be prepared to defend your use of this mark.) The error may lie in a logical fallacy, or in a misuse of indicator words (particularly subordinating conjunctions or conjunctive adverbs): "Subject A would be in my best interest because I cannot express myself orally and can do it better writing it"; "The teacher is often well-trained. He cannot be blamed, however, for his students' mistakes" (should the *however* simply be omitted, or does the student mean *therefore*?).

MEANING The sentence sounds as though it ought to make sense, but the meaning doesn't come through: "Melville has a normal, but brilliant style." (Less serious than *COHERENCE*; more serious than *CLARITY*.)

MISPLACED MODIFIER Misplaced modifiers usually bother the reader most when they are misleading and not just technically misplaced: "He saw a white man who stood up for blacks being criticized" (student meant that the white man was being criticized for standing up for blacks); "I read an article about how to grow plants in a magazine."

MIXED CONSTRUCTION The result of switching syntactic horses in mid-sentence. "The scientist can only hope that when the knowledge he released to the world, be used for good" (writer has forgotten that she started an adverbial clause of time); "It is in observing that man can recognize errors, or possible solutions, but it is in applying that recognition that gives the observation purpose" (*applying* suddenly replaces *man* as the subject of the last verb in the sentence); "In merely observing and attempting to understand, yet not doing anything with that understanding would not be an answer to this search, this question" (begins with a prepositional phrase that cannot be the subject of *would not be*).

MODIFICATION Part of the modification structure of the sentence is clumsy, confusing, or incorrect. Usually this mark is reserved for badly handled prepositional phrases and relative clauses. (See also *SUBORDINATION*.) Most other faulty modification is indicated by more precise marks (see *MISPLACED MODIFIER* and *DANGLING MODIFIER*): 1. "Most of us have jobs we don't even like, with a daily routine we follow strictly" (we may have a daily routine, but our jobs don't); "Without getting along, society would collapse" (a fatuous and clumsy tautology); "There are always a few women who are brainwashed into the degrading housewife class of honor thy husband's preaching" (one can be brainwashed into accepting a degrading role or classification, but not "into [a] class" and much less a class "of honor thy husband's preaching"). 2. "We have a very enormous intake capacity [for information], that is rapid, but only capable of regurgitating the basics" (a great many things go haywire in this sentence, including *all* modifying elements; note especially, however, the relative clause [can a capacity be rapid?], a false attribution that borders on being a *PREDICATION* error).

MOOD See *TENSE*.

NSW--NO SUCH WORD Sometimes hard to distinguish from spelling errors: *Literatesy*. Usually student-created words follow normal English word-building patterns, but the wrong pattern for the word in question: *analyzation* (*analysis* -- *[i]zation* as a living English suffix is usually added to adjectives: *rationalization, generalization*); "The reader can learn characterizational traits of the hero."

^ --OMISSION A generous mark, to be used if you feel that in the haste of composition or copying the student has omitted a word. The general quality of the essay will reveal whether you are facing an accidental omission or a genuine error.

PARAGRAPH Paragraphs too short, poorly developed, or too long. One sentence rarely makes a paragraph.

PARALLEL STRUCTURE In marking exams, include errors in *COMPARISON* under this category. In essays, the mark indicates the following: 1. An error in the mechanical structure of a parallelism: "He likes flying and to swim," "It was expected that men and women of a certain age would be married and thus becoming respectable, responsible citizens." 2. An incompatible parallelism of ideas; "People can be forced to fight a battle, a revolution, an unjust regime, a riot, or other form of violent demonstration" (does the word *fight* here mean *wage* or *oppose*, or both, or neither?). Parallelisms may involve more than two items: "This person has given me the insight into being an individual, to having my own thoughts, my own views, and to extend and reach for whatever goals I have set for myself." (See also *COORDINATION*.)

PASSIVE 1. Unjustifiable use of passive forms when the logical subject of the verb is clearly indicated: "Because the

facts are arranged by both authors in a logical order, the reader immediately respects their genius"; this sentence would be improved by making the logical subject of *are arranged* into the grammatical subject: "Because both authors arrange the facts in a logical order, . . ." 2. The passive voice often masks an effort to avoid using *I*: "My thoughts are expressed in language that is understandable to another person." 3. Students also think that the passive sounds authoritative. (See also *AGENT* and *JARGON*.) 4. *DANGLING MODIFIERS* often result when a passive verb is the main verb of a sentence: "Relying on a description of the main character, the nature of the problem is revealed."

POINT OF VIEW 1. *One* becomes *you* becomes *we*: "One is made aware of problems that confront you every day of our lives." 2. *You* is generally unsuitable to formal expository prose, and more often reserved for the essay that gives instructions or mounts a personal argumentative attack. At times, however, *you* is quite acceptable if the writer is consciously trying to achieve an informal effect.

PREDICATION A complex of incorrect statements containing the verb *to be* or a verb that patterns in the same way: *seem, become, appear, feel*, etc.: "Cecil Taylor's followers are more or less a cult." See separate endnotes on *PREDICATION* and *STATEMENT*.

PUNCTUATION This notation should be reserved for errors in the internal punctuation of sentence: "Miss Sullivan was hired to teach Helen not to love her"; "So be it, until victory is America's and there is no enemy but Peace!" Errors in end punctuation (.;?!) should be marked more precisely as producing *FRAGMENTS* or *RUN-TOGETHER SENTENCES*, although in marking diagnostics one may be generous about an occasional semicolon used as a comma. Errors in the use of apostrophes are errors in *GRAMMAR*.

REDUNDANCY Use of superflous words in the sentence, re-expressing an idea already sufficiently explained: "An ordinary biography of normal life . . ." "Melville *begins right away*, telling *first* of his background." May be cured by ruthless excision. (Redundancy deliberately cultivated for the sake of stylistic effect is *pleonasm*: ". . . the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red." *Tautology* [a negative word] is a redundancy resulting from a predication in which the complement is already contained in the subject: "All men are human"; "The Pharaohs were kings"; "a free gift.") See also *REPETITION*.

REFERENCE Every initial *it, this*, or *that* is not necessarily a reference error, and broad reference is not always a bad thing, but . . . . Reference errors usually involve pronouns or demonstratives with no clear referent. Watch also for dangling *whiches*, and the use of *the* when no previous reference to an item has been made ("The book is very interesting"--and no book has been mentioned.)

REPETITION While *REDUNDANCY* signals that too many words have been used to express a single idea, *REPETITION* points to the repeating of an individual word, phrase, structure, or (most commonly) whole idea or argument. Often a symptom of the lack of sufficient ideas to fill out the required essay length. Correction requires adding ideas rather than simply cutting words out.

RUN-TOGETHER SENTENCE Often the result of a comma splice--the use of a comma instead of a period or other form of end punctuation. Such splices are common with conjunctive adverbs (*however, nevertheless, thus, then,* etc.), which, despite their name, cannot function as conjunctions. *RTS* can usually be corrected easily by inserting (a) a period plus capital letter; (b) a semi-colon; or (c) a comma plus *and, but,* etc. Examples: "It doesn't just happen, this talent must be cultivated"; "I am a Political Science major going to go to Law School, therefore the ability to write well is important to me."

SPELLING Do not mark as spelling errors the misuse of apostrophes or the faulty choice among some homophones--*there, they're, their; who's, whose,* for example. These are *GRAMMAR* errors.

STATEMENT The subject of a sentence is doing something it cannot do, or is acting on an object it cannot act on: "Music satisfied an expression of anger"--*can* music satisfy an expression? See separate end-notes on *PREDICATION* and *STATEMENT*.

SUBORDINATION 1. Omission or logical misuse of a subordinating conjunction, e.g., *because* used where *whenever* should go (see *LOGIC*). 2. Excessive use of subordination when a participial phrase might be substituted (see *WORDINESS*). 3. Faulty structure in reported questions and statements: "He wondered what was I doing." 4. Omission of a necessary *that* to introduce reported speech or a relative clause: "He told me, in a voice I could hardly hear, he was going." (Relative clauses that go wrong are usually errors in *MODIFICATION* or occasionally *REFERENCE*.)

TENSE 1. An unwarranted switch from one tense or mood to another in the body of an essay. 2. An error in sequence of tenses, either in a conditional clause ("If he would come, I will go") or in reported speech ("He said that he will come"). Errors in the *form* of tenses are marked as *GRAMMAR* ("He use to do this").

TRANSITION 1. A lack of transition--a sudden hop from one subject to another. See *CHOPPY*. 2. A faulty transition indicator (*however* when the sense of the sentence requires *thus*). See *LOGIC*.

VAGUE DICTION Use of vague words and phrases that obscure the meaning of the passage being read, or betray that there really is no meaning. Often associated with *JARGON, REDUNDANCY, REPETITION,* and *WORDINESS*. "Earlier people probably had to live, of neces-

sity, a very *practical* life." See also *MEANING* and *CLARITY*.

WORD CHOICE The word used is almost right, but not quite right, for the context: "Thoughts which are *orally* expressed . . . ." The mark sometimes indicates that the word in question is from the wrong level of diction for the context: The kind of examination we were required to take was *gross*." Errors in *WORD CHOICE* annoy the reader; *WRONG WORDS* usually amuse.

WORDINESS The use of ten words when five will suffice: "The young man was elected *to be* president of the oldest club *which exists* at the University." (*Which* and *who* frequently signal that shortening can take place: "I like the picture *which* is in the president's office.") Flabby predication--"There *is* an uncle of mine *who* thinks he is a genius"--is one form of wordiness. See also *REDUNDANCY*.

WRONG WORD 1. A word is absolutely wrong--but may look something like the word the student is groping for (the malapropism): "They had something to break the *monopoly* of every day life." 2. Sometimes a word has sufficient vagueness to satisfy the student, but not the reader: "I saw my mother in an entirely new *spectrum*"; "Lewis Carroll achieves much diversity in his characterizations by including human, animal, and *produce* characters."

* * * *

PREDICATION AND STATEMENT

Many grammar books treat errors in predication and statement as problems in logic. We prefer to regard them as errors in structure that reveal an underlying weakness of logic (as so many structural errors do).

PREDICATION

English sentences based on the verb *to be* (or verbs that pattern in the same way: *seem, become, appear*, etc.) are formed thus:

1.	NOUN	VERB	NOUN (or noun phrase, or noun clause)
	Harry	became	President.
	Alexander	is	an understanding editor.
	The money	was	what I was looking for.
2.	NOUN	VERB	ADJECTIVE (word, phrase, or clause)
	The dog	looks	sick
	The book	seems	unusually worn.
	This section	is	as (how) I want it.

3. NOUN | VERB | ADVERB OF PLACE OR TIME (word, phrase, or clause)

The party	will be	tomorrow.
The party	will be	in the garden.
The party	will be	where you are, darling.

Errors under 1: The complement cannot *be* the subject: "Being able to express oneself on paper is a great sense of satisfaction"; "I feel the meaning of 'sell' as a way to make gains in a capitalist system is a material gain" (how can a meaning be a way, and end up by being a material gain?); "Adolf Eichmann was an example of Nazi atrocities" (was he an atrocity? or one who committed atrocities?).

Errors under 2: The quality expressed cannot be fitted to the subject: "During time of stress, a new invention is more receptive to acceptance" (how can an invention be receptive?).

Errors under 3: Use of adverbial *phrases* other than those of place or time as subject or complement: "By her clothing was the way I knew her"; "Her status in society was by her clothing" (revealed by? determined?).
2. The use of adverbial *clauses* other than those of place or time as the subject or complement: "The reason is because I like candy"; "How he studied is why he succeeded."

STATEMENT

When the verb is not a copula (*be, seem,* etc.) statement errors occur when the subject of the sentence is doing something it cannot do, or is doing it to an object that cannot receive the action. Isolate subject, verb, and any necessary object--and see if they work together. Here are three classes of statement errors:

1. *Faulty verb*: "The $45 fee for Subject A levies an additional financial burden on students" (can a fee levy anything? can burdens be levied?).

2. *Faulty subject*: "The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis limits communication between people" (can a hypothesis limit communication?).

3. *Faulty object*: "President Ford tried to persuade the opinions of congressmen that his pardon of Nixon was justified", (can the President persuade opinions, or should the object be *congressmen*?).

Notice that errors fall into these categories according to the reader's view on which part of the sentence is most wrong, or most amenable to correction. Here are a few more statement errors, taken from student papers:

a. Emotionally charged situations transcend expression of feelings

in words.

b. Anthropologists had a discovery in the Midwest this week.

c. One chapter avoids drug busts.

d. . . . knowledge of the concealed mysteries given by nature.

e. Prisoners should not be allowed in medical experiments.

f. Because of the genetic damage that may occur, man may simply no longer give birth to man.

g. Learning to write essays and research papers doesn't promise an individual a job.

h. The belief in human communication cannot conceive of animal communication.

Correction of statement and predication errors is rarely simple. Sometimes a single word (especially the verb *to be*) can be changed to provide sense in the sentence, but usually the whole idea has to be rethought and re-expressed from the start. Sentence h, for example, probably contains some idea like this: "People who believe that accurate communication is characteristic of human beings may find it very difficult to accept that animals also communicate with one another." Or maybe it doesn't. Reading between the lines is a presumptuous and hazardous undertaking. Only a consultation with the student can tell you what he meant for sure. Observe that here, as in so many type of errors, you are faced by the "telescoping" syndrome, the tendency of the student to compress a whole sequence of thought into one sentence, and to omit one or more vital steps in the process.