

SLCC Community Writing Center

Volunteer Training Manual 3.0

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Thank You!

Welcome to the SLCC Community Writing Center (CWC) Volunteer Training Program. Before getting started, the SLCC Community Writing Center staff would like to extend our appreciation and thank you for offering your time and talent to our programs.

The CWC has several opportunities that can be a valuable experience for both writers in the CWC programs and the volunteers that assist them. In fact, volunteers often find their own writing improves as they assist others with their writing. Additionally, the CWC promotes both writing and diversity within the community. Without volunteers, many of our services would not be possible.

Through this training program, we will explore the tools necessary to be an effective writing assistant—as a Writing Coach, Writing Group Mentor, or Workshop Facilitator. This packet will address such areas as writing pedagogies, processes, policies and procedures, problem solving, expectations, boundaries, group dynamics, diverse learners, feedback, grammar and invention strategies. This information will provide many of the strategies necessary to successfully assist individual writers or mentor a group of writers.

Again, we would like to welcome you and thank you for your willingness to volunteer in this program. We look forward to building a strong community of writing with you.

Everyone Can Write!

SLCC Community Writing Center

The SLCC Community Writing Center (CWC) opened to the public in October 2001 in the Artspace Bridge Projects multi-use complex just across the street from the Salt Lake City homeless services district.

The CWC was founded on the premise that everyone can write with assistance and support from others. Based on the model of student writing centers that most colleges and universities have on campus to serve student writing needs, the CWC serves the entire Salt Lake metropolitan area community.

Because of a strong commitment to the community, Salt Lake Community College funds the CWC. SLCC values the variety of learning opportunities the CWC provides to people in our valley, and is dedicated to providing on-going support to its programs.

These programs include Writing Coaching, Writing Workshops, and the DiverseCity Writing Series. The CWC also partners with local community organizations and governmental agencies to empower their clients, staff and volunteers through writing.

In November 2005, the CWC moved to its current location on the Plaza of the SLC Main Library. From this amazing location, the CWC has seen its programs grow exponentially and partnerships have more than tripled. We are very fortunate to be in this space.

The CWC is led by faculty from SLCC and is staffed by a small group of part-time Writing Assistants and dozens of community volunteers just like you. Without volunteers, the CWC's programs would not exist. Volunteers are an essential part of providing writing education opportunities to our community. Thank you.

Volunteer Opportunities

A variety of opportunities are available to individuals interested in volunteering for the SLCC Community Writing Center.

Writing Coach

CWC volunteer Writing Coaches provide collaborative writing assistance and feedback, both online and at libraries and community centers throughout the Salt Lake Valley. Volunteer writing coaches typically volunteer two hours every other week and assist writers who have a range of backgrounds and abilities.

Volunteers interested in becoming a Writing Coach typically provide a six-month commitment to the program.

DiverseCity Writing Series Mentor

The DiverseCity Writing Series is a community writing program which offers multiple, ongoing, writing groups along the Wasatch Front. DWS volunteer mentors coordinate and facilitate group meetings.

Volunteers interested in becoming a DWS Mentor are required to attend two training sessions, and typically provide a six-month commitment to the program.

Workshop Facilitator

The SLCC Community Writing Center offers a variety of writing workshops, created largely in response to community requests. Volunteers may assist as an aide or co-facilitator, and eventually facilitate workshops.

Volunteers interested in teaching a workshop assist a workshop facilitator on at least one workshop, and can then develop curriculum of a current workshop or a new one in cooperation with CWC staff.

Other Opportunities

Each month, the Volunteer Coordinator puts out a call for volunteers on an as-needed basis. The CWC has regular opportunities to volunteer in the center and off-site, including:

Writing Partnerships

Creating and enacting outreach plans

Workshop assessment

Creating writing handouts

Website development

Blog maintenance

Community calendar updates

Marketing and media relations

Podcasting and filming readings and workshops

Grant research and case studies

SLCC Community Writing Center Mission Statement

The SLCC Community Writing Center supports, motivates and educates people of all abilities and educational backgrounds who want to use writing for practical needs, civic engagement and personal expression.

SLCC Community Writing Center Foundational Principles

The SLCC Community Writing Center is based on principles of Education, Community and Collaboration. These principles serve as a framework for the future of the CWC; further, the CWC has historically challenged—and should continue to challenge—the following assumptions about writing and education.

The CWC challenges the assumptions...

- that some types of writing are more valuable than others;
- that publication validates a piece of writing;
- that higher education is somehow separate from community education; and
- that higher educational institutions can know what a community needs or wants without entering into full and mutually-beneficial partnership with that community.

CWC Foundational Principles *continued...*

Education: The CWC is a place ...

- Of learning: all CWC activities are designed for people to gain literacy skills, knowledge and/or abilities they did not have before.
- For student employees to learn to become teachers, mentors, developers and managers. Students should always be a part of the CWC staff and special efforts should be made to recruit student employees from SLCC.
- Where effective writers develop through the responses of skilled readers; CWC Writing Assistants are skilled readers.
- Where programming maintains a balance across all types of writing (practical, civic and personal).

Community: The CWC and its programs ...

- Must be available to everyone, regardless of income, education, ethnicity, opinion or background.
- Do not duplicate already existing writing services or programs; rather the CWC coordinates with other organizations to mutual benefit.
- Actively seek out partnerships with communities and individuals who have been traditionally underserved by higher education.

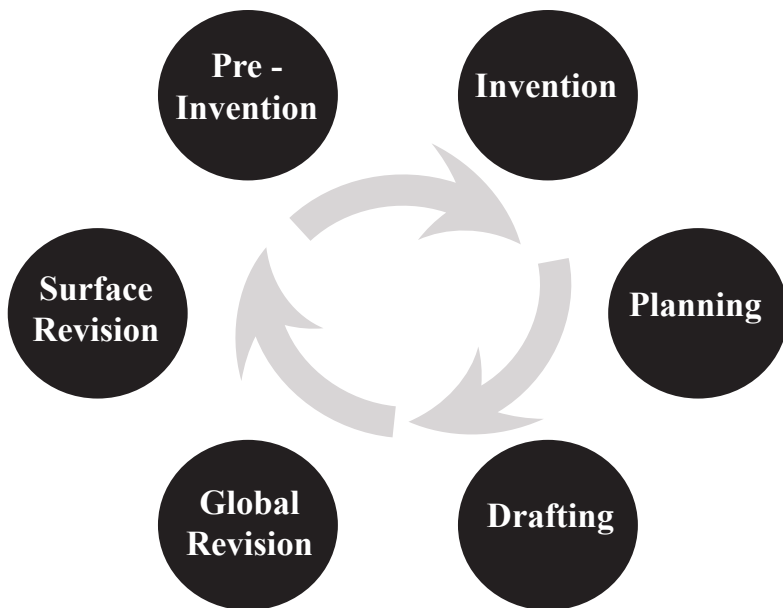
Collaboration: The CWC believes that ...

- Because all writing is, at some point, a collaborative act, the CWC is a collaborative environment on all levels.
- Collaborations should always be guided by our partner in learning and focused on developing new writing knowledge.
- Our programming should be responsive to community requests and inquiries; the CWC does not determine what the community's writing needs and desires are.
- We should not take any political or philosophical position in a writing partnership; rather we focus on writing instruction only.

Representing the CWC Philosophy/ Pedagogy

Whether working at the CWC or another outreach location, volunteers represent the CWC to individuals, other organizations and the public. Because of this, each volunteer must be familiar with the CWC philosophy and pedagogical approaches to learning, and be able to enact these approaches in all volunteering situations.

- Volunteers should know and understand the CWC Mission Statement.
- Volunteers must recognize their role—and behave accordingly—as representatives of the CWC to individuals, organizations, and the community.
- Volunteers should understand and practice the collaborative, non-directive approach to working with both individuals and organizations. Procedures to follow include:
 - a. Respond to individuals with grace and flexibility. Be able to maintain your composure when the conversation is confusing, in process, or even chaotic. Be sure to listen, using discretion when offering comments and suggestions.
 - b. Ask more questions than you answer. This will keep you in the collaborative and non-directive mode.
 - c. Read your audience closely and adapt. If they are not responding to you well, stop and ask questions of how you can better work with them. Do not expect them to meet you where you are—you must meet them.
- **Hate Speech Policy:** In accordance with the SLCC Community Writing Center Mission Statement and the values of Salt Lake Community College, the CWC and its volunteers do not provide assistance on writing projects which appear to promote abusive or violent responses from their audiences.



The Writing Process

Writers engage in a process in every writing situation they encounter. Certain elements—pre-writing, invention, planning, drafting, and revising—often recur throughout this process, but one section of the process doesn't necessarily end when another begins. The parts of this process, when they occur, and how often a writer uses any one part can differ dramatically depending on mood, deadlines, writing styles, specific tasks, etc.

Above is a model of stages in the writing process. Remember this process when facilitating feedback with the writing group or one-on-one. Consider what stage each writer is in, and give feedback accordingly. If a writer is in an invention stage, it can be inappropriate to begin critiquing grammar—an activity better left for a later surface revision.

While each stage is variable, being aware of a writer's process and recognizing which stage the writer is in can greatly assist in providing helpful feedback.

Your Writing Process(es)

In order to assist people in recognizing their own writing processes, it is important that you are aware of your own. If you are, you can talk about your own processes as neither good or bad, as strategies, and connect with the writers you are working with. What do you do when you take on a writing task? What comes easily? What is more challenging to you? What do you wish you could do “better”?

Pre-invention

- Estimate schedule
- Read, read, read
- Establish topic
- Determine interest
- Determine purpose
- Determine audience

Global Revision

- Critically read
- Review purpose
- Review criteria
- Cut out flab
- Look for gaps
- Plan to start again

Surface Revision

- Critically read
- Use spell check
- Use grammar check
- Find common errors
- Read aloud
- Get feedback

Wh
yo
writ
proc

What is
our
writing
process?

Invention
Research
Brainstorm
Freewrite
Generate questions
Loop
Cluster

Planning
Narrow topic
Talk
Ask Questions
Outline
Narrow topic
Prepare schedule

Drafting
Avoid order
Start in the middle
Ignore grammar
Ignore spelling
Use words you know
Put work aside

Rhetoric: What Is It and How Does the CWC Use It?

Rhetoric. This is a fairly small word with a whole range of meanings in our society, from rhetorical question (a question that already contains the answer), to political rhetoric (double-speak, selling an idea), to classical rhetoric (the art of speaking in Aristotle's time). It can be a confusing concept, but it is actually quite simple.

In all types of human communication (written, visual, oral), there is content, or the “what” of the communication, and there is rhetoric, the “how and why” of the communication. For example, this CWC Volunteer Training manual has content (words and ideas) and it has a rhetoric: how those words are organized and presented for the purpose of training volunteers in a half-day training session. The content is broken up into sections, provides activities and examples, and is, hopefully, written in a style that is accessible to a wide range of people.

At the CWC, we use rhetoric to solve problems. When a writer comes to us asking for help on writing a resume or a poem, that situation (which we will call the rhetorical situation) is a problem to be solved. The writer must figure out the “what” of the writing task, and also the “how” (the rhetoric). In other words, the writer, the writing coach and/or the writing mentor work together to combine the what and the how in the most effective manner.

You will also be using rhetoric when you interact with the writer herself. This is an oral rhetoric and will help you to decide how to interact for the best outcome. You may want to take charge in some situations more than others, or back off and offer examples, reflect what the writer is saying, etc. These are all rhetorical strategies of the “how/why” of communication. In the following pages, you'll see that you know more about rhetoric than you may think.

Rhetorical Analysis and Conventions

As human beings, we are constantly analyzing the world around us. When this analysis enters into the areas of communication, be it verbal, written or visual, you rhetorically analyze the information you receive and produce. Everybody analyzes and responds to rhetorical situations, whether they are aware of it or not.

For example, when you are talking with someone, you follow certain conventions, rules, or assumptions that will make the conversation generally go smoothly (unless you are trying to start an argument or there is confusion). A very simple example of this is when you are eating out. Usually a server will approach your table, hand you menus and ask if you would like anything to drink. You often respond with “Thanks” for the menus, and order water, soda, or whatever else you want. The server then goes away, gets your drinks and comes back for your order.

You and the server are analyzing the rhetorical situation while it is occurring and are responding in ways that seem appropriate to the situation in order to reach your individual goals or purposes. The server wants to provide you with a pleasant dining experience, wants to appear friendly and, ultimately, probably wants a good tip. You want to have a nice meal, a moment to choose your food, and pleasant service. You are both operating within the accepted conventions of this particular rhetorical situation.

Now, if a server approached your table and said, “Whaddya want?” without giving you a menu, they are probably breaking the conventions of the rhetorical situation, and might not get a good tip. In fact, you might leave the restaurant for another. However, the key word here is “might” because it all depends on the context of the rhetorical situation.

“Whaddya want?” could possibly be an appropriate message from a server. If, for example, you are a regular at a restaurant, and the menu items are posted on a chalkboard instead of on individual menus. You approach a bar to order your meals and are familiar with the server who smiles upon seeing you. In this case, the question may not sound rude or impatient, but is the convention that is followed in this specific rhetorical situation.

Rhetorical Analysis and Writing

The previous example seems obvious when presented, but it's an important example of the awareness that we carry around with us as we communicate with others throughout the day. We tend to take for granted that we have oral, or verbal, rhetorical awareness and we move through these exchanges with relative ease (even though we often find ourselves tongue-tied, embarrassed, or needing to practice when we enter a new verbal rhetorical situation such as giving a speech).

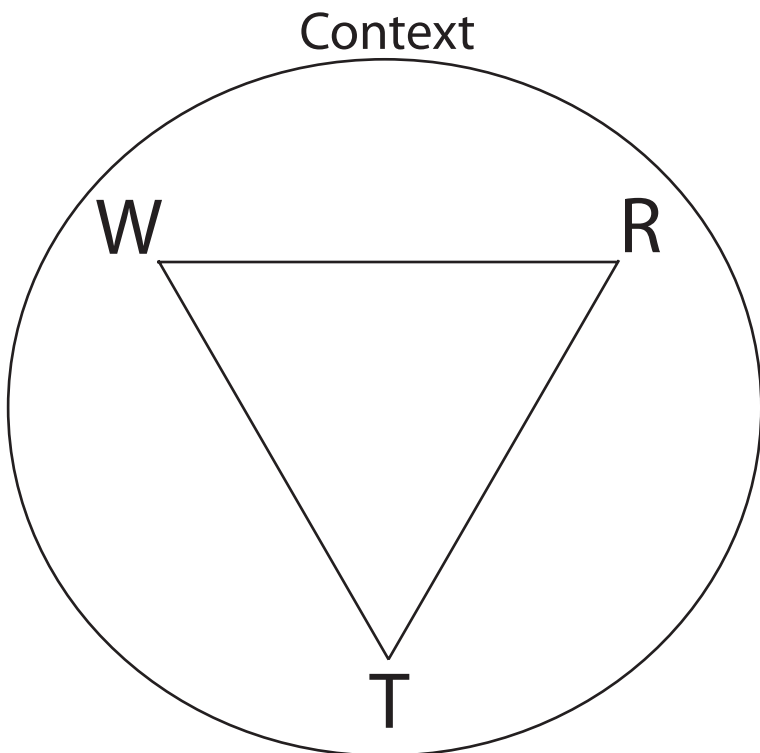
With writing, the same need for rhetorical analysis is present at all times, but we tend to think it is as easy as our oral/verbal awareness; we assume it should feel as “natural” as speaking. It's true that we tend to be as casual with our analysis when we write familiar documents, like letters, or lists, or even e-mails to friends. However, analysis of a writing situation is doubly important because, in writing, the audience is more often than not removed from the vicinity of the writer, and thus cannot give immediate feedback like a listener can do for a speaker.

In other words, if you say something wrong in front of your boss, or your friend, their face/body language may tell you they aren't pleased, or they may just say, “What did you say?” You can re-analyze the rhetorical situation immediately and remedy the situation. But, in writing, you are not there with your text to interpret any misunderstandings that may occur. Therefore, your communication must be more thoughtfully pre-planned. You must consider specifically who you are writing to, and what expectations and needs that audience has.

A Model of Rhetorical Analysis

A basic model of the general rhetorical situation includes a writer, a reader and a text. The writer and reader each take one point on the top of a triangle and the text is located at the bottom point. This demonstrates the interdependent relationships of the three elements of any writing situation. If one element changes, the others will too. Also, it encourages the writer to remain aware of these relationships so writing decisions can be made thoughtfully, with consideration of the text and the audience.

In this model the triangle is located within a circle that represents the context of the situation. While the three elements have an interdependent relationship with each other, they all exist within a context that affects those relationships. Rhetorical analysis of that context, along with the relationships within it, is essential to effective writing.



Context, What is It?

Context is a general word for all the intricacies of a rhetorical situation. Below are some examples of things you should consider when analyzing rhetorically. As you write, and as you work as a Writing Coach or mentor with other writers, you will need to use your problem-solving abilities to figure out the most useful areas of analysis. Consider how each of the following contextual variances may affect a writer's decisions about the text they are producing, or in fact, how a reader may interpret a text.

Relationship between the writer and the reader...

Personal

- Friend
- Relative
- Stranger

Mood

- Friendly
- Antagonistic
- Eager
- Frustrated
- Happy
- Uncomfortable
- Unfamiliar

Professional

- Boss
- Employee
- Applicant

Relationship between the writer and the text...

- Comfortable/Uncomfortable
- Familiar/Unfamiliar with subject
- Familiar/Unfamiliar with style
- Time/Desire to meet expectations/Thoroughness
- Confident/Concerned/Bored

Other factors...

Sociocultural Issues

- Ethnic/Cultural norms
- Class differences
- Educational differences
- Religious assumptions
- Challenging gender roles

Conventions of text

- Brief
- Detailed
- Forms/Formats
- Visuals
- Research
- References/Citations

Questions for Thinking Rhetorically

One of the best ways to approach a problem or a situation is to ask questions. The same goes for rhetorical situations you encounter when working with someone on their writing. As a Writing Coach or Mentor, you will probably need to assist writers in formulating questions that will help them analyze their writing task/situation. Even though our goal is to have writers become self-sufficient, you may need to get them started or prompt them to come up with their own questions. Below are *some* examples that you can use in your own writing and in your Writing Coaching. Also, you will likely need to put these questions in language that the writer can understand at first. Use your own problem-solving abilities to work out the best way to get these questions going.

Writer...

- 1 Who is the writer?
- 2 What is the writer's relationship to the audience?
- 3 What is the writer's purpose?
- 4 What is the writer's relationship to the overall issue/context?
- 5 How does the writer show awareness of these relationships in the text?

Text...

- 1 Why is this type of text appropriate for the writer's purpose?
- 2 What is the style of the text?
- 3 What specific rules does the text need to follow?
- 4 What type of language does the text need to use?
- 5 What format is appropriate for this type of text?

Reader...

- 1 Who is the reader?
- 2 Is the reader the intended audience of the writer?
- 3 What are the reader's expectations?
- 4 What relationship does the reader have to the writer?
- 5 What knowledge does the reader have about the text?

Context...

- 1 What attitude does the writer have relating to the writing?
- 2 What is the writer's experience working with this type of text?
- 3 How do the physical surroundings affect the writer in writing?
- 4 Does the writer have a history with this writing task?

Rhetorical Analysis and Problem Solving

Consider the following situations. How would you learn about the specific context of the following rhetorical situations? What questions would be useful to help you understand? Then, how would you begin to reflect your understanding back to the writer so they can have a more conscious awareness of the writing situation?

- Rosa, a mother of a two-month old baby, received a letter from an older friend asking how her life is going. They haven't been in contact for several years. Even though she wants to respond, she feels uncomfortable about writing her back because her friend could never have children of her own.
- Gerald has to apply for a job within the next two days or else his federal assistance payments will be cut off. He wants to apply for a job he saw listed in the paper for a position at a certain warehouse. They require applicants to submit a one-page resume and a cover letter along with their application.
- Jennifer is trying to get into an Ivy League school and her application essay is due in a month. She has started on it several times, but cannot get a good hold on what she wants to say. Her grades and test scores are all fine, but she thinks she needs a really good essay to be considered.
- Tomas, a supervisor at a local grocery store, has been asked by one of his best employees to write a letter of recommendation for a promotion. Tomas has been a supervisor for only a month and has never had to write such a letter. He really wants to help his employee get the promotion, but he is uncertain about how to write a good letter.

Providing Feedback

When providing feedback, the majority of interaction is talking, but receiving feedback about writing isn't easy. Even if the assistance is desired, it can be difficult to listen to suggestions about methods to improve a piece. CWC Volunteers don't need to be overly gentle or tentative with their feedback, simply respectful of the writer and the text—acknowledging this difficulty and following several guidelines to best provide feedback to writers:

Understand the Writer's Intentions

Keep it Positive

Demonstrate and Encourage Note Taking

Make it Conversational

Separate the Writing from the Writer

Remember it isn't a Class

Understand the Writer's Intentions

Remember that the writer is the owner of the writing. They can choose to consider or ignore comments offered to them. Make sure writers are aware that these opinions are just that, and the feedback needn't be followed in the end.

It is useful to know what the author is trying to accomplish—the ultimate goal. The main role of a CWC Coach or Mentor is to understand the writer's intentions, and assist them in achieving their goals. Ask questions about purpose, context and tasks they are working on.

Keep it Positive

Provide and encourage commentary on the parts of the text that are impressive, that catch the eye, or that are simply interesting. Feedback doesn't need to be feel-good commentary, but there is something positive that should be said about a piece. Letting a writer know where they are succeeding can be just as helpful as assisting with challenges.

Demonstrate and Encourage Note Taking

Make a habit of writing down notes and questions while you're reading, and encourage the writer(s) you are working with to do the same. Check with the author to see if notes should be made directly on the document, or on a separate sheet of paper. These notes can be phrases, words, simple underlines or even symbols—anything that will remind you of your thoughts when later providing feedback, or provide an opening for discussion.

Make it Conversational

Feedback should be like a conversation with the text and the reader. It's more than just presenting reactions to writing; it's a discussion. Ask questions and allow the writer a chance to consider methods of improving their writing. When presenting a reaction, describe the reasons for this reaction and give the writer an opportunity to clarify. It is often easier to help lead the writer to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Always ask if the writer understands what you are saying. If not, encourage questions and more conversation until you both know that there is mutual comprehension.

Separate the Writing from the Writer

While it can, at times, feel awkward, it's important to separate the writer from the text. Use statements like, "Help me understand what this paragraph is trying to say," rather than, "I don't understand what you are trying to say here." Refer to the writing rather than the writer. Analyze the method used to present the message, rather than the message itself.

This process may take some time to get used to, especially when dealing with a piece written in first person, or about the writer. Nevertheless, separating the writing from the writer will allow the feedback process to be more constructive, and can help take the sting out of constructive criticism.

Remember it isn't a Class

CWC Volunteers aren't grading; they're responding. A teacher or English major isn't needed to respond well to someone's writing. Everyone participates in the feedback process with a variety of knowledge—writer and volunteer alike. Additional group members bring their own knowledge as they respond, with mentors assisting in and guiding the discussion. Library resources, questions inspiring additional research, and advice guiding future development can broaden the scope of the discussion.

The best responses are thoughts, reactions, feelings, impressions and questions that arise while reading or listening to someone's writing, and no response is exactly right or wrong.

Roles and Policies



CWC Volunteer Support

One of the foundational principles of the CWC is that writing is a collaborative act; it is not something that occurs in isolation from other people. Given that, being a volunteer for the CWC should also be seen as a collaboration, a larger community effort of which you are an important part. Because of that, the CWC offers the following structures of support for you as you start and develop as a Writing Coach or Mentor. Whether you are a brand-new volunteer or a seasoned veteran, we want to be sure to stay in touch with you, and help you communicate with other volunteers and the CWC staff as we support the Salt Lake community.

Volunteer Blog

Volunteers can keep up to date with the CWC, and discuss their own experiences as CWC volunteers through the volunteer blog at <http://www.cwcvolunteers.blogspot.com>

Email

The Volunteer Coordinator will keep in regular contact with you, but you should always feel free to contact the CWC via email at cwc@slcc.edu with a question, concern or success!

Volunteer Meetings

The CWC will offer periodic in-service trainings for volunteers (and CWC staff) on specific issues related to writing assistance, such as working with ESL writers, engaging the community with civic writing, and others. If you have a topic you would like us to host, let us know.

Volunteer Recognition

You'll be recognized as a volunteer in our triannual newsletters, and at least once a year, we try to bring all volunteers together to celebrate your donations to the CWC and the community.

CWC Volunteers VS. Editors

Sometimes writers may approach a volunteer expecting their writing to be edited. This often happens because of a misunderstanding of the purpose of SLCC Community Writing Center programs. Volunteers for the CWC collaborate with writers, focusing on helping the writer beyond any single written work.

This can be a balancing act, because your goal is to provide assistance so the writer can become self-sufficient enough to understand and use the resources themselves and to take ownership of their own writing. This is considered “non-directive” tutoring. At the same time, the writer could get very impatient if you make the simplest analysis a long conversation (i.e. “Now, do you see what it says at the bottom of the letter? ...Your name, right. Why do you think you need to put your name there?”). It is better to reserve these types of advisory conversations to the more complex elements of the writing situations (i.e., the balance of brevity and detail in letters).

CWC Volunteers

- Focus on the writer’s development
- Establish a collaborative relationship and support the writer
- Encourage the writer to take ownership of their writing
- Ask questions and collaborate on possible revision strategies
- Make comments on good writing, and provide constructive feedback
- Collaborate with the writer to develop ideas for the text
- Surrender final responsibility for the text to the writer

Editors

- Focus on the text
- Maintain authority over the writer
- Assume ownership of the writing
- Tell the writer how to revise the writing
- Focus mainly on issues in the writing that require improvement
- Provide ideas that need to be developed within the text
- Take final responsibility for the text

Are You an Editor?

Below are various situations that may arise for you in the writing center. Knowing that your role is a Writing Coach or Mentor, how do you respond to them?

- You are working with Glen on his resume. He insists on a five-page resume so he can include his entire 40-year work history. Due to questions you've asked him, you know that the job he is applying for recommends that resumes be only one page long. He believes that if he shows the prospective employer that he has a full and varied work history that will make him stand out among the candidates.
- You have been working with Sheila for two weeks on a letter she wishes to send to the Salt Lake Tribune regarding her welfare services. The two of you have worked from her general idea to a draft of a letter that still needs work in clarifying what she wants to say. There are also several surface errors that may prevent it from being published. You are working with her on these details when she finally throws up her hands and says "Oh, can you just fix it already? YOU know how, don't you? Just do it for heaven's sake."
- Jen is writing a letter of application to a prospective employer. The job she wants, Assistant to the Copy Editor, is one that will require strong abilities in grammar and spelling, since she will be proofreading the documents before they go to her boss for final approval. Her letter is really strong, but you see two very minor grammatical errors that she has not picked up on, even after reading the letter out loud.
- Jason brings in a short story that he has been working on for about a month, which he feels is ready to be read by an unbiased reader. You read the story and get really excited about working with him on it. The two of you begin to talk and you make several recommendations about a certain character. Jason says that character really isn't central to what he is doing, and wants to focus on the other characters more.

Absences

Because we advertise our services at specific times, it is important that volunteers attend each scheduled shift. If you are unable to attend for any given reason, the following procedures should be taken:

- If you know in advance that you will be unable to attend an upcoming volunteer session, contact the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator will contact back-up writing coaches to try to cover the shift. If no one is available to cover the shift, the Organization Representative will be contacted and informed of the absence.
- If you have to cancel on the day of your volunteer shift (because of illness or other emergency), please call the SLCC Community Writing Center and the volunteer site directly to inform them of the absence. (You will be provided with the site phone number upon placement.)

If a volunteer misses two sessions without notifying the CWC or the volunteer site, it will be necessary to replace the volunteer.

Promotional Activities

Some volunteers have expressed interest in teaching workshops, posting advertisements, or conducting other activities at volunteer sites as a way to generate more interest in the program. The CWC supports such ideas, but asks that you request approval by the CWC prior to implementation. Several programs require additional training, and all advertising must adhere to SLCC marketing guidelines. If you have ideas about additional programming or advertising at your volunteer site, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteer Reporting

All volunteers are asked to track and record the hours they donate to the CWC, as well as the activity, location and a brief description of the events that took place. This information will allow the CWC to produce reports on volunteer effort for grants, funding and community service. It also allows the CWC to provide accurate information to volunteers should you wish to present your volunteer service in applications and resumes.

This record should be submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator each month. Hours can be submitted through the SLCC Community Writing Center website (<http://www.slcc.edu/cwc/help/volunteerhours.asp>), as can session reports (<http://www.slcc.edu/cwc/help/coachsessions.asp>). This information can also be submitted in a brief e-mail to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Reporting Online (Preferred)

When reporting online, there are two places most volunteers will need to visit. First, hours should be reported at <http://www.slcc.edu/cwc/help/volunteerhours.asp>.

Next, Writing Coaches should report their session at <http://www.slcc.edu/cwc/help/coachsessions.asp>. All other volunteers should report their session via e-mail or in a physical report.

Reporting Via E-mail

When reporting via e-mail, volunteers can report their hours and session information in a single message. Be sure to include the following information in the e-mail:

1. Your name
2. What type of volunteer work you did (coaching, mentoring, workshop, etc.)
3. The dates, start and end times of your volunteer hours
4. The location where you volunteered
- 5a. As a Writing Coach:
 - If the session was online or in person
 - The name(s) of the individual(s) you assisted

- The stage the writing was in (pre-invention, invention, planning, drafting, global revision or surface revision)
 - The type of document
 - A brief description of the session
- 5b. As a DWS Mentor:
- The number of individuals who attended the group
 - An e-mail contact for any new DWS members
 - A brief description of the session
- 5c. As a Workshop Instructor:
- The names of individuals who attended the workshop
 - A brief description of the session

Sample Online Report Form

Volunteer Hours Monthly Report

For each time you've volunteered this month, please indicate date, duration, location, and activity. If you have volunteered more than four times this month, please submit the form as many times as necessary.

Name:

Email address:

Date:

Duration:

Location:

Activity:

- Writing Coaching
- Workshop
- DWS Mentor
- Event
- Center/ Administrative

Writing Coaching

The CWC is committed to providing opportunities for writers to develop their work in a supportive environment. The writing coaching program provides one-on-one collaborative writing assistance and helpful feedback. Writing coaching is open to all ages and all types of writing, such as resumes, essays, short stories, and letters.



The Writing Session

Each session that you have with a writer will be slightly different. Often, situations will arise where you will not immediately know what to do and you will need to use your problem-solving skills to assist the writer to the best of your ability. The CWC maintains the the best Writing Coach isn't necessarily a great writer, but is a trained and thoughtful *reader*. However, there is a general structure to writing sessions that you can rely on until you become comfortable working as a Writing Coach.

Length

Typical writing sessions last 30 minutes. However, they may range from 10 minutes to 45 minutes, which is typically the maximum length that a Writing Coach and a writer can concentrate fully on a task. When you encounter sessions that seem to need more time than the 30 minutes, please use your own judgment. You have some options:

- If you do not have another writer waiting, extend the writing session in increments of 10 or 15 minutes, telling the writer that you are doing so. But, do not go beyond an hour because you will be burnt out beyond usefulness to the writer.
- If you have another writer waiting, ask your current writer if they might work on their own for a while and that you will come back to them after your next session. (If you choose this option, make sure you take a five-minute break before resuming with the previous writer. This is important because you do not want to give your waiting writer the sense that you were rushing to get back to them.)
- If you do not have time to continue working with the writer, schedule another writing session with them for their earliest convenient time. You may suggest that they come to the CWC for additional writing coaching.

Greetings

Since writers at our various writing coaching sites may not have heard about writing coaching or the CWC, making sure that you are accessible is very important. Patrons may be interested in writing coaching, but may be hesitant to ask for help. You may need to initiate the conversation, even if you just ask whether the writer has heard about the CWC or writing coaching. At the very least, make sure that your body language communicates readiness to help. The greeting you offer can be the most important part of the writing session for the writer. Also, in order to have a successful writing session, you must have a respectful and positive rapport with the writer. It all begins in the greeting.

Unproductive greeting:

Writing Coach: “Hi. Where’s your writing? What do you want me to do?”

Imagine that you’re at the doctor’s office with a cold. The doctor comes in, plops down in the office chair and says “So, what’s wrong with you?” with a sarcastic roll of the eyes. It’s nearly the same thing.

The Greeting

Below are some expected greeting situations. How do you respond (or initiate)?

- A writer comes up to you asking about Writing Coaching, inquiring “So, what is it that you do?”
- A writer tells you, “I need this to be edited.”
- A writer walks in and tells you that they just want to drop a paper off to be proofread. They say they will come back in 2 hours to pick it up.

Asking Questions

Your job as a Writing Coach is to help the writer accomplish what they want to accomplish. It is very important that you keep your judgments, assumptions, and personal opinions aside, unless the writer asks you for them. In order to do this, you need to ask questions, the first of which is often:

“So, what do you want to work on today?”

You will get a range of responses to this question, from “I want to edit this letter!” to “Oh, I don’t know, I just need help on my writing.” Obviously, the latter requires more questions, but so does the former. To be an effective Writing Coach, you must respond to the writing in context and with an understanding of its purpose. The only way you can do this is to ask more questions.

Some questions you can ask include:

- What are you working on?
- What is it for?
- What is the main point you are trying to make?
- Who is going to receive it?
- Is there a deadline?
- Why are you writing this?
- What do you feel good about in this piece?
- What would you like me to focus on?

These will get a conversation started. Sometimes a writer wants you to “fix” their writing. This is most often because they have not gained awareness of their writing process or how a Writing Coach can help them. They may feel insecure or vulnerable about their writing, or they may have other pressures going on and the writing isn’t their top priority. You’ll need to explain why you need to ask these questions so they can understand the process and purpose of Writing Coaching.

To Read Aloud or Not to Read Aloud

There are different schools of thought regarding how a Writing Coach should address a written document. Some say the Writing Coach should read it aloud. Some say the writer should read it aloud. Some say the Writing Coach should read it silently. You have to follow your own judgment here. Consider the following issues:

- How long is the document? Reading aloud takes longer than reading silently. You cannot read a five-page article out loud and have much time left in your writing session. However, if it is a one-page letter, then it should be easy to accomplish with plenty of time left in the session for you to respond and assist the writer.
- What is the purpose? If structure, grammar and style are necessary, as with a resume, then reading out loud is often the best way to go. Our brains “edit” written language too fast for our pens to keep up when we read silently. However, if we read out loud, mistakes are much more evident.
- How does the writer learn best? Not everyone learns in the same way. Some writers work well looking at the text and discussing details with the writing coach. Some are find it easier to see errors and details if they hear someone else reading their work, or if they read out loud. This can often assist writers whose first language isn’t English.
- What tools can assist in looking at the writing from a different perspective? If the writer would prefer to read it out-loud, then ask them to read it “backwards” starting with the last sentence. Surface errors are caught much better this way. Emphasize to the writer that they should read it just as they have it written.

Essentially, you need to balance purpose and time. Realize that you do not have to do one to the exclusion of the other. You could read some sections out loud to get a feel for the writing, and then read through others silently, pausing to read out loud when you are confused or unsure of what the writer is trying to say.

After Questions...

It depends. Since you will be working with writers of all ages at various stages of their writing task, the next step will vary. Some writers will come in with a text or document that they want help on. Some will come in with just ideas. Some will come in with few ideas, but a purpose, such as: “I have to write a resume! Now!” This is where the questions will help you make your decisions.

Getting Ideas

If the writer needs help getting started, you can help them do some invention or brainstorming. Sometimes, a writer at this stage just wants to talk about their ideas. So, you may have a writing session where no writing actually takes place. You can ask questions, assist in making lists, contribute your own ideas, and anything else to get the ideas going, the purpose focused.

With this type of a writing session, it is very important to be sure the writer has a “plan” when they leave the writing session. A writer could be left hanging with lots of ideas and not know what to do with them. A plan could consist of scheduling another appointment, suggestions on where to go from where you left off, or anything else that provides some structure for them to work with.

Organizing purpose

Sometimes a writer will come in with lots of ideas or a specific goal in mind, but will not know how to put everything together or get started. Often this can be the most frustrating experience for writers. After asking questions to find out what they want to do during this session, you will ask more to help determine how they want to organize their writing. This is where your role as a Writing Coach will likely shift slightly from “questioner” to “advisor.” For example, if a person needs help with organizing a letter, you can get a sample of a letter from the library, the Internet or the reference materials at the CWC.

Again, with this type of writing session, it’s important for the writer to leave with a plan. You also may need to explain why the writing sessions are only 30 minutes long, as a writer may just want to “get it done now,” and may become impatient or frustrated.

Responding/Revising

Perhaps a writer will come to you with a draft of something already written. They will likely be expecting some response from you, and may even ask you to act like an editor, telling them what to do to “fix” their writing. Since your goal is to assist them in learning, and not to do the writing for them, you should gather as much information as you can about the writing situation so you can respond appropriately.

You may find that the writer has done a great job analyzing the rhetorical situation, and that you need only offer suggestions for minor revision. However, as you understand the context of the writing and read through the draft or text, you may find that the writer has “missed the mark” so to speak. Perhaps the writer needs to completely start over. This can be the most difficult of writing sessions, but also the most productive. If you believe that a writer will need to do a large amount of revision to reach their writing goal, it’s best to start slowly.

As you certainly can remember from your own writing experience, having to start over can be an intellectual, as well as emotional, jolt to the system. Be prepared for defensive reactions and impatience. Stick with it, remain focused and calm and talk about what the writer wants to accomplish and how to get there. Try to stay away from reasons why the draft you are working with doesn’t work, and why a revised version will work better.

Editing

Some writers will come to you wanting their work proofread or edited. Your initial response as a Writing Coach will likely be “Hey, we don’t do that here.” However, editing is a part of the writing process, so this may very well be a reasonable request from a writer.

However, before you dive into proofreading or editing, you should ask the writer questions so you can understand the rhetorical situation just like in every other writing session. Then, as you read through, you will be able to analyze whether they have reached their purpose and perhaps they do just need a quick proofread. If you see that they need more assistance, try to

approach it as described in the above Responding/Revising section, because you'll probably encounter the same "jolt" when you discover that their draft may need some more revision.

HOCs before LOCs

One rule of thumb for working with writers is to be sure you address the "HOCs" which are "higher order concerns" such as purpose, awareness of audience, the structure of the document and the information, before you address "LOCs" which are "lower-order concerns" such as grammatical perfection, spelling, and detailed formatting issues. Writers will often approach you with a request that focuses on LOCs because they are not often not aware of the larger questions they need to ask. Your job to is be sure the HOCs are all in order before getting to the LOCs.

Ending the Session

It's your responsibility to keep your eye on the clock during the session. The writer shouldn't have to worry about that. About five minutes before the end of the session, you should begin wrapping up and ask if the writer has any questions. You should be sure to ask what the writer's plan is for the text and help to facilitate that plan if necessary. Also, be sure to fill out the Writing Session Report at the end of each session.

Providing Writing Coaching for Academic Work

At some point as a Writing Coach, you will probably be asked to provide feedback on a piece of academic writing. These fall outside the CWC's mission because the majority of colleges and universities have writing centers that provide students with academic writing coaching. Thus, you may assist writers with academic assignments the first time they come to you for feedback, but you must explain to them that the CWC does not compete with services provided by other organizations, that their student fees pay for a writing center at their university or college, and direct them to go to their campus writing centers thereafter. However, if the writer attends an institution that doesn't have a writing center, or their center is closed temporarily, go ahead and help him/ her. You may work with high school students from any school. These are the institutions that do have a writing center:

- **Salt Lake Community College
Student Writing Center:
801.957.4893**
- **University of Utah Writing Center:
801.587.9122**
- **Westminster College Writing Center:
801.832.2271**
- **Weber State Writing Center:
801.626.6463**

DiverseCity Writing Series

The DiverseCity Writing Series (DWS) bridges the Salt Lake community's diverse social, economic and educational backgrounds through writing, collaboration, and dialogue.



The DiverseCity Writing Series

Early in August 2000, the SLCC Community Writing Center began working with writers from local organizations in two-month writing workshops. Each workshop culminated with a publication and public reading. During the first two years, the DiverseCity Writing Series worked with a variety of organizations: Liberty Senior Center; Justice, Economic Dignity and Independence for Women; The Road Home shelter; and Cancer Wellness House.

In summer 2002, the DiverseCity Writing Series expanded to offer multiple, on-going writing groups. Volunteers were trained in collaborative writing group strategies and became mentors for a variety of open-interest and specialized writing groups.

In fall 2003, the work of participants in these groups was assembled to create *sine cera: People Are Strange*, the first DiverseCity Writing Series anthology. These writers were then invited to present their writing at a public reading.

Since then, the DiverseCity Writing Series has grown and changed, but the mission remains the same. Operating on the principle that everyone has something to say, and that writing empowers individuals not only to say it, but to share it with family, friends and community—the DWS looks to create an atmosphere where people can ponder, express, share, and revise.

The goals of the DiverseCity Writing Series are two-fold. To provide assistance to individuals within a community to express ideas and thoughts through written words. Second, to create forums through which under represented voices can be made public. These goals are accomplished through a variety of methods:

- On-going, open-enrollment writing groups meeting in the Salt Lake City area.
- Emphasis placed on the writing process—to ponder, express, share and revise.
- Trained volunteers mentoring writing groups—utilizing a collaborative, non-directive approach.
- Publication of *sine cera*—and anthology that celebrates and circulates work created in the DiverseCity Writing Series.
- Public readings coinciding with the publication of *sine cera*.

Writer Rights and Responsibilities

A writing group is more successful when each member is aware of their general rights and responsibilities. As your group develops and grows, these expectations may expand, but only after discussion. Below, is a description of what group members should expect of themselves and each other. You will be provided with handouts of these rights and responsibilities to share with your group on a regular basis.

Rights

- To write about anything that you choose without fear of judgment being passed upon your beliefs, opinions, or imagination.
- To expect that you will receive thoughtful and careful comments and feedback on your writing when you ask for it.
- To not receive comments and feedback if you do not wish to have any.
- To be able to plan on consistent group meetings and times.
- To be able to come to the group without writing prepared, as long as you provide useful feedback and respond to the other writers.
- To understand that you may not always have feedback to offer, even when you try.
- To retain exclusive rights to all intellectual property (i.e. ideas, writing, submissions) you have created and openly shared with group members.

Responsibilities

- To be open to the ideas of others and understand that reading about and commenting on writing you may find offensive or embarrassing is part of writing in a group.
- To provide thoughtful and careful feedback when you have the opportunity to.
- To be sure group members understand whether you want feedback or not on your writing at a given time.
- To attend writing group meetings regularly and to contact the Writing Group Mentor if you cannot make it.
- To participate as fully as possible in the writing group, including writing when you sometimes don't feel like it.
- To tell group members what kind of feedback you want and to direct their comments to specific areas of your writing.
- To respect the ownership of others' intellectual property. To not copy anyone else's material for distribution or sale, or represent others' creative material as being your own.

Group Dynamics and Conflicts

The writing group format has many advantages for both developing writers and Mentors: it allows for group discussion, sharing ideas, and constructive criticism. These are factors that contribute to an individual writer's growth and their ability to communicate using the written word. Additionally, in a workshop setting, a Mentor can work with several writers simultaneously without facing the task of being solely responsible for responding to or critiquing each writer's work. Unfortunately, the ideas and feelings that result from this sort of collaboration are not always positive. You may find that all writers do not get along with each other, and that try as you might, you do not get along with all writers. However, while this presents a challenge, your group can still successfully work with each other.

Setting Boundaries

Working with writers, especially on personal or creative projects, will be rewarding, challenging, and at times, frustrating. Undoubtedly, through the course of the writing groups and the writing process, you will feel a certain connection both to the writers you work with and to their texts. While there is nothing wrong with being interested and invested in an individual's success, always keep in mind that your involvement is professional. This does not mean that you must adopt a cold or stand-offish manner as you work with a writer, however, you should consciously maintain a boundary between personal and professional interactions.

Since the writing group environment provides a rather informal setting, there will be times when it will be very difficult to distinguish between what is personal and what is professional. When this happens, keep in mind that your goal is to help a writer develop their writing and realize their ideas on paper. During a writing workshop, you are not acting as a therapist, psychologist, or social worker (even if you possess these skills). Furthermore, adopting such roles detracts from the writing process and does the writer a great disservice because it takes the attention off the writing. This does not mean that you should discourage a writer from using composition as an outlet for dreams, thoughts, fears, or emotions. As a writing Mentor, you should avoid tackling the content of the piece, and to turn your attention to its structure, style, and so on. Also, keep in mind that if you become uncomfortable with the subject matter, or the intensity, of a piece of writing, you can set limits according to what you feel is appropriate.

Setting Boundaries

Mary is a quiet young woman in her late twenties. In social situations she is often shy and slow to communicate with others. She is currently working on a poetry project that involves a series of poems that focus on “inner strength.” She asks you to read them and offer feedback. As you read through her poems, you realize that Mary was abused by a family member as a child, and you suspect that she may now be in a harmful relationship.

- How will you approach Mary to discuss her work?
- What is your main focus or objective as you workshop with Mary?

Managing Difficulties

Even when a writing group is aware of their general rights and responsibilities, each time a group of individuals get together for a discussion, difficulties can occur. Throughout your time as a CWC Volunteer, you will be expected to think on your feet, and do your best to manage situations as they happen. The Volunteer Coordinator will be available to assist you when problems arise, but there are some common difficulties that you can prepare for:



What if no one talks?



What if someone monopolizes the conversation?



What if there is non-constructive criticism and not enough encouragement?



What if someone's writing is very hard to understand and no one knows how to respond?

What if no one talks?

In the first few meetings, new writers in your group may not be completely comfortable sharing their ideas with each other. This is a great time to focus on writing. It's fine to spend an entire meeting going through writing ideas and prompts, and asking if writers would like to share with the group. Likely, one or two will. If no one does, share your writing with them. By seeing you taking the risk, they will be more able to do so themselves.

In some discussions, writers may not feel comfortable sharing their ideas. Ask general questions of the whole group, but as you get to know individual group members, feel free to ask them directly. Putting someone on the spot in a friendly can be an effective way to get a shy person talking. Give lots of reinforcement and encouragement when people do respond. Validate their input.

Also, get accustomed to uncomfortable silences. Cultural differences can create different expectations about how long someone should take to respond. Individuals can be shy or unsure. Silence can feel like a lifetime, but try to wait at least 10 or 15 seconds before jumping back into a conversation.

What if someone monopolizes the conversation?

When writers are sharing their work aloud, you should monitor the time each person has. You may have to interrupt a writer to ensure everyone has a fair turn. Say something like, "Thank you for that, but we need to move on (or hear from so-and-so)."

Also, feel free to ask questions to individuals, especially those who rarely speak. Spread the conversation around; get people used to expressing their ideas. You can call on people to read or respond as well, asking them if they have anything to say.

If nothing else works, have a private conversation with the talker. You can keep this positive by saying value their input, but need to be sure everyone gets a chance to contribute. Ask them if they can try to focus or limit their comments. Encourage them to use their confidence to encourage others to talk by asking other members of the group for their opinion. Turn this leadership role away from monopolizing and towards supporting the group.

What if there is non-constructive criticism and not enough encouragement?

If someone offers non-constructive criticism, watch first to see if other members of the group contradict the non-constructive comment. If they don't, jump in and attempt to counteract it. Try this a few times and see if the problem dissolves.

If non-constructive criticism continues, a private conversation is needed. Ask questions of the criticizer about whether they enjoy the group. If they are, point out how their comments are often negative, and they may not realize it. Ask them how you can help them provide more helpful criticism. If they aren't enjoying the group, ask them why and what you can do. A direct conversation like this will resolve most problems. If it doesn't, contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

What if someone's writing is incomprehensible and no one knows how to respond?

If you're not sure what the piece of writing is about, simply ask the writer to explain what they were trying to do with the piece—what idea was this piece of writing meant to convey? Get them talking. After you have an understanding of the purpose, ask them to again read a selection (no more than a paragraph). Likely, you will be able to make a connection between the selection and the purpose.

If you are still having difficulty, pick a particularly confusing sentence and ask them to reword it, or explain to you and the group what the sentence is trying to say. Simply by talking, the writer will likely make connections between the spoken conversation and the written text, helping them clarify the phrasing. It may be a good idea to make a note of the writer's explanation.

If the writer is unable to describe what the writing is trying to say, ask to talk to the writer after the meeting. At this point, you can look at the piece of writing and ask more specific questions about the purpose of the piece, and what they are trying to say. If you feel like the writer would be receptive to some individual assistance, encourage them to come to work with a CWC Writing Coach.

Workshops



Planning Your Workshop: CWC Mission and Foundational Principles

All Community Writing Center workshops should respond effectively to our mission statement and foundational principles, particularly the following:

The CWC is a place of learning; all CWC activities are developed for people to gain literacy skills, knowledge and/or abilities they did not have before.

- Writers may not leave a CWC workshop with a thoroughly polished piece of writing, but they should learn new knowledge and skills. The emphasis of workshops should be generating new knowledge, not publishing processes. While the workshop instructor may give participants a few ideas about publishing, this should not be the focus of the workshop.
- Writers should leave the workshop with knowledge that will allow them to explore their own writing processes. By focusing workshops on the various steps of composing from brainstorming to revision, writers will leave with not only genre knowledge, but writing knowledge.

Because all writing is, at some point, a collaborative act, the CWC is a collaborative environment on all levels.

- Writers should have the opportunity to share their writing and receive feedback from other participants and the workshop facilitator at multiple points in the workshop.
- Writers should be encouraged to actively participate in the workshop and to interact with other writers. The workshop should not emphasize lecture, but rather active participation.

Writers have specific knowledge and experience that motivate their interest in writing and the specific topic of the workshop. Because every group of workshop participants will be a little different, the workshop facilitator will need to remain flexible in terms of curriculum and activities in order to meet writers' needs.

Designing Workshop Curriculum: Learning Progression

Although people have a variety of different learning styles (visual, tactile, kinesthetic, auditory etc.) most people have similarities in the way they approach gathering and processing new information. The steps below can be used as parts of a lesson plan addressing different stages of the learning process. In each stage, different emphasis is placed on the responsibilities of the workshop facilitator and the participating writers. These steps may not reflect your curriculum exactly, but can be used as a guide as you develop a lesson plan.

Introduction/Hook

The Introduction or Hook is a short activity designed to grab a participant's attention and initiate the learning process. These types of activities focus on introducing both the skills the participant will be developing and the information needed to begin the lesson. It gets writers into "learning mode."

This activity has a lot of advantages—it gives examples of Beat poets and Beat poetry, it has the participants interacting with the material immediately, and it encourages the participants to interact with each other.

Instruction

The Instruction portion of a workshop meeting often takes the form of a discussion group with the facilitator providing the information. This is where the topic overview and background information are given, starting in where the Hook left off. This section is usually brief because it has participants assuming a more passive role. However, it is a good way to get through the information necessary to contextualize the rest of the workshop.

Example:

The Hook

Ask each participant to write two truths and one lie about themselves. Have participants introduce themselves with these three sentences not revealing which is the lie. This ice-breaker activity engages them in the "fiction" process while making introductions engaging and conversational.

Instruction

Define/describe fiction, particularly "character development," giving background information, sharing techniques and handling more comprehensive discussion.

Modeling

Go through examples of character development with the group, highlighting structure and word choice. You can use excerpts from stories or familiar characters in literature. Have participants describe the characters' personalities in the written examples.

Modeling

Modeling is designed to move the learner from the input of information to the application of information. It acts a bridge between learning about writing and the act of creating a piece of writing. It is the “how to” section of the workshop.

Guided Practice

Guided practice involves the participants in collaboratively creating a piece of writing, from generating ideas to organizing those ideas into a piece of writing. This allows writers to ask questions and discuss the process as they work though it. It is also a time for writers to get ideas from each other, tapping into a larger creative pool as they prepare to write.

Fiction/ Character

Guided Practice

Ask participants to assume their favorite fairytale or fable character, and then have them draft a list of questions to determine the identify of another “character” in the workshop. This activity will engage them in practices in smaller groups with facilitator feedback throughout the activity.

Independent Practice

Have participants start drafting scenes in which characters’ personalities are revealed through description and action. Once again, the group should share their progress with each other, offering feedback and support.

Feedback/Discussion

At least 1/3 of the full workshop should be set aside for participants to share work and offer feedback. Guide them through the “Feedback” handout.

Independent Practice

Independent practice involves the writer completing the designated writing task independently. This section of the workshop can be divided into parts with the participants sharing their material as they work through the process of developing a piece of writing.

Feedback/Discussion

Most workshop participants will tell you they enjoy thoughtful feedback on their work in a safe and trusting environment, but are hesitant to seek the feedback on their own. Multiple opportunities for feedback and discussion in the workshop provide a safe and trusting environment. Participants begin to know each other and feel more comfortable sharing work with others. For each section of the workshop, offer time for sharing of work and discussion. At the end of the workshop, devote a lengthier segment of time for sharing of longer works and guided group feedback.

CWC Workshop Facilitators VS. Teachers

Sometimes workshop participants may approach a workshop expecting to be “taught” by the “instructor.” Instead, workshop facilitators for the CWC collaborate with participants, focusing on helping the writer through a process of writing, rather than telling them “how to write.”

Of course, all workshop facilitation requires some explanation as to the techniques and process. As long as participants can engage in a writing activity and discussion as part of the process then they eventually become self-sufficient enough to understand and use the resources themselves and to take ownership of their own writing.

CWC Workshop Facilitators

- Focus on the writer’s development through a process
- Establish a collaborative relationship through prompts, group activities, group feedback and discussion.
- Encourage the writer to take ownership of their writing
- Ask questions and collaborate on possible revision strategies
- Allow for flexibility of outcomes and encourages personal learning outcomes for each participant
- Listens as much as speaks (participates)

Instructors

- Focus on the process itself (instead of allowing it to be interpreted and personalized)
- Maintain authority by sharing knowledge
- Assume ownership by managing the writing
- Tell the writer how to revise the writing
- Determine specific outcomes
- Speaks more than listens (lectures)

Are You a Facilitator?

Below are various situations that may arise for you in the workshop. Knowing that your role is a Writing Facilitator, how do you respond to them?

- Chris is in the Writing for the Web workshop. His boss at the engineering firm where he works has asked Chris to write short project profiles for the company's website. After the ice-breaker and introductions, you discuss key elements of web writing and offer writing prompts. Chris becomes frustrated because he really wanted to learn about project profiles for the web, and the workshop has not covered this, nor will it.
- Jenna is part of a three-part workshop. The first workshop session, you notice Jenna is unusually quiet and does not participate in the writing prompts. You suspect she's shy and hope she'll warm up. But the second writing session is no better. The third session participants will share their work. You're not sure how Jenna will respond or if she'll participate.
- You've planned an activity for small groups in the workshop. You notice that at least three people are still sitting by themselves. You ask if they'd like to form a group, and they all say no. Brandon says he prefers to work alone than in a group. You try to explain that the activity needs more than one person, and he says he'd rather sit out.
- Sue has written a story for the Fiction workshop about a young, suicidal girl. She describes in vivid detail, the character's suicide attempts and her struggles with depression. The participants are all sharing their work. When it is Sue's turn to discuss her work, she is suddenly interrupted by Kate who asks Sue if this is really more autobiographical than fictional.

SLCC Community Writing Center Workshop Proposal Form

Facilitator:

Phone:

Date:

Email:

Workshop Title:

Workshop Summary and preferred dates/times:

Facilitator's related qualifications and experiences include:

How this workshop supports the CWC Mission:

Other Information:

Target audience (if applicable):

Anticipated registration limit
(if other than the standard 12):

The SLCC Community Writing Center
Library Square Plaza — 210 East 400 South, Suite 8
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 957-4992 — www.slcc.edu/cwc

SLCC Community Writing Center Workshop Curriculum Plan (1 of 2)

Facilitator:

Phone:

Date:

Email:

Workshop Title:

Goals: What are the goals of your workshop? How do these goals support the CWC's Mission Statement and Founding Principles?

Assignments: What "assignments" or activities will you use in the workshop to meet these goals (please be as specific as possible)?

Instruction Methods: What methods of instruction (lecture, discussion, small group, etc.) will you use? How will this method use the non-directive, conversational approach to teaching used at the CWC?

Other Information:

Preferred dates/times:

Proposal approved?: **Yes** / **No**
Additional materials needed
(if applicable):

The SLCC Community Writing Center
Library Square Plaza — 210 East 400 South, Suite 8
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 957-4992 — www.slcc.edu/cwc

SLCC Community Writing Center Workshop Curriculum Plan (2 of 2)

Facilitator:

Phone:

Date:

Email:

Workshop Title:

**Please provide a general outline of how the
workshop will run:**

Session One:

Session Two:

Session Three:

Additional Sessions (if applicable):

The SLCC Community Writing Center
Library Square Plaza — 210 East 400 South, Suite 8
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 957-4992 — www.slcc.edu/cwc

SLCC Community Writing Center Workshop Follow-Up Form

Facilitator:

Phone:

Date:

Email:

Workshop Title:

Goals: What were the goals of your workshop? Were these goals met? How could they be improved in future workshops?

Timeframe: How well did the length of the workshop work? Could the workshop be shortened or lengthened? How important was the workshop timing (re: holidays, events, issues, etc.)?

Recommendations: Are there any recommendations for offering this workshop in the future? What advice would you give to future facilitators of this workshop?

Other Information:

Dates/Times:

Additional materials used:

The SLCC Community Writing Center
Library Square Plaza — 210 East 400 South, Suite 8
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 957-4992 — www.slcc.edu/cwc

Appendicies

- Appendix A:** Volunteer Conflict Resolution
Appendix B: sine cera
Appendix C: CWC Volunteer Profile



Appendix A: Volunteer Conflict Resolution



Step 1: Try to work through writer/writer, Coach/writer and Mentor/writer conflicts by addressing them directly. Document this step in writing.

Step 2: If the problem does not get resolved or if you were not comfortable dealing with the issue, report the incident to the Volunteer Coordinator. Document this step in writing.

Step 3: The Volunteer Coordinator will review the conflict and, if necessary, set up a conference with the SLCC Community Writing Center Assistant Director, the host organization and/or the individuals involved.

Step 4: If the issue is not resolved, it will be referred to SLCC Community Writing Center Director.

Volunteer Conflict Resolution Documentation

Volunteer:

Writer(s):

Date:

Location:

Description:

Actions Taken:

(check all that apply)

- Discussed with writer
- Mediated between writers
- Contacted Volunteer Coordinator
- Spoke with Assistant Director
- Spoke with organization rep.
- Other:

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Appendix B: *sine cera*

In the fall of 2003, writing by members of the DiverseCity Writing Series were assembled to create *sine cera: People are Strange*, the first DiverseCity Writing Series anthology. The anthology celebrated the work of participants, who were then invited to present their writing at a public reading. This tradition continues today, with two publications printed each year (one in May and one in December).

Publication

Individuals interested in publishing their writing in *sine cera* must be in a DiverseCity Writing Series group, and have finished some form of writing while in that group. Writing must be submitted electronically (email or disk), unless previously approved by the Volunteer Coordinator. Each submission is limited to a maximum of 2000 words, and each writer is limited to a maximum of 3 submissions. Submissions will be selected for publication and the final edit will be done by the Volunteer Coordinator and the Assistant Director of the Community Writing Center.

Reading

The DiverseCity Writing Series reading of the latest edition of *sine cera* is held on the release date of the publication. All DWS mentors are required to attend this event to support the writers in their groups. In order to ensure a successful reading, we also ask mentors to announce the event to the writers—asking those who submitted to the publication if they would be willing to read at the event. This reading is open to the public, and writers and mentors are encouraged to invite their family and friends.

If mentors have enough individuals who would like to read, but feel nervous in front of an audience, feel free to use a DWS meeting date as a day to practice reading.

Appendix C: Volunteer Profile

Name:

Phone:

Date:

Email:

Located the CWC Through:

I would like to volunteer for the CWC because:

My related educational and professional experiences include:

Many programs require a minimum time commitment, please indicate the days and times you are available below:

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri

I am interested in:

(check all that apply)

- Writing Coaching
- DiverseCity Writing Series Mentor
- Workshop Facilitator
- Office Assistance
- Special Events
- Other:

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