

Peer Collaboration Philosophy

My belief is that writing should never be forced. First and foremost, it is a method of creative expression and a vessel for communication through the voice of the writer and only the writer. Whether it's a scientific report, an analysis of a short story, or a comparison between two works, the spectacle of the piece itself comes from the words and the meaning that the writer gives them. There is nothing to writing except curiosity, imagination, and individuality.

My philosophy in writing reflects this heavily. As an engineering major, writing is one of the only places where the answers are never finite, and whatever I say always goes. I want my clients to discover the same sense of freedom in their own writing and realize that they have the power within themselves to transcend the mundane. I am only your guide. Specifically, I rely on three main cornerstones of my practice; collaboration, specialization, and provision.

Writing is a *process*. It is counterintuitive to believe that one can write a paper the night before it's due and expect to get the best grade possible. I will admit, I am guilty of doing this and have learned this lesson the hard way. My method of writing involves a recursive process that involves a constant shuffle between the four major steps of writing- prewriting, writing, revision, and editing. By focusing on this process, as a writer, I ensure that I develop the most impactful piece that I can. As a peer consultant, It is my job to simply guide you through this process and focus on areas that as a reader, I think could be more clear and concise. *The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors* emphasizes the importance of the collaborative effort, "learning about writing takes place through a conversation with the writer- a conversation in which it is the student, not the teacher, who is doing most of the talking" (30). This quote stands out to me because it points out the true intentions of a tutorial, that I assist in your writing, not that I completely take over your piece and remove your voice. By letting the client take control of the tutorial, it ensures

confidence in one's writing as well as keeping an individualistic mentality throughout. As a peer consultant, I am here with you for the long haul.

My background as a STEM major makes me stand out a little from the rest of the Writing Center tutors. While it would be hard for me to offer collaboration strictly in the confines of technical English syntax and grammar, I do have a unique perspective that English majors do not; technical STEM writing. I am very well versed in the category of lab reports and scientific writings and this is where my writing skills shine. *OGWT*, mentions why specialization can be beneficial, "when tutors did not have disciplinary expertise, they were unable to help these writers see the larger, more global problems with their drafts" (149). As someone who has seen a lot of diversity, as far as report expectations go, I can confidently assist in ways to make your report more presentable and concise. This includes content and presentation, which is of a lot greater importance than you may think.

The last link in my philosophy is revisional thinking. This is basically the idea that going into a tutorial, I must remain as unbiased and as open-minded to the subject as possible. I want to know what this piece of writing means to you, in your own words. Tell me about the context of the class this is for, about the background of the novels you are reading, or the implications of the experiment you just completed. As a tutor and naturally curious person, I want to hear about it all in order to gain more insight into what the overall purpose of your paper is. Although I offer many specialized viewpoints, they must be in balance with my insights as a tutor specifically. *OGWT* describes this by saying, "if you have specialized knowledge about the writing, it is important not to let this expertise override your role and insights as a tutor... reflect on how the client might balance and blend these two bodies of knowledge" (152). It is not my job to use my background knowledge to fully construct a new paper but to use that previous experience to our

advantage by guiding the client in the right direction. It's all about the balance that both the peer collaborator and the client are an equal part of.