

Appendix D: Focus Group Sessions

Interview Guide for WC Tutors

***Hand out checklists as tutors arrive, so they can complete them before the focus group discussion begins. **Pass around a sign in sheet to submit with memo for stipends.**

Introduction:

*Welcome, and thank you for participating in this Focus Group. The topics and questions we'll cover today are based upon feedback provided by your fellow colleagues who previously completed the WC Tutor Survey. Through our discussion today, we hope to arrive at recommendations and future actions that will help students learn writing skills. **To protect your interests and invite candor, we will reference your comments anonymously as "a participant in a tutor focus group said...." We ask that you help us to ensure confidentiality by also maintaining the anonymity of your colleagues' contributions.*

A. Strategies tutors use at the ASC to meet our students' needs:

There were some themes that emerged in your answers to the surveys that identified some key needs of our students and your strategies to address them. We'd like to follow up on these themes now:

1. By a show of hands, which of you would characterize *encouraging students* as a key strategy that you employ? _____
2. And how many of you regularly try to encourage students by providing specific, positive feedback to their efforts? _____
3. What are some of the challenges you face when trying to provide specific, positive feedback?

4. What other tutoring strategies would you characterize as particularly important for helping students maintain momentum in their work, after they leave the tutoring session? (Then determine how many agree, for each unique answer.) _____

5. How do you try to guide students toward higher order issues when they approach you to proofread their work? (That is, toward focusing on the audience, organization, developing their argument, etc.)

6. How do you manage multiple drop-ins at once?

B. Follow Up on the Checklist of Factors for Building and Maintaining Trust:

From the checklist on Factors for Building and Maintaining Trust that you filled in today, we'd like to follow up on your responses.

a. The more popular strategies for building trust are: _____,
_____, & _____.

How do you go about enacting these strategies, and how do you know they are successful?

b. The following factors were specifically indicated as ones that you or your colleagues are open to professional development on: _____,

_____, & _____.

Could you give a little more detail on any particular aspect of the topic or skills you would like to learn?

(At this point, I'll check to see if there are any additional trends or issues to clarify that arose on the checklist for building and maintaining trust....)

C. Resources that would help the ASC to better meet our students' needs:

1. By a show of hands, how many of you would like faculty to share more information with the ASC about their classes? _____
 - a. How many of you would like faculty to provide written descriptions of their assignments? _____
 - b. How many of you would like faculty to provide written descriptions of their rubrics and/or grading criteria? _____
2. How many of you would like the ASC to maintain model examples of written work?

3. What types of assignments would you like model papers for?

4. In terms of personalized feedback regarding students, survey responses indicated tutors would like to see: substantial feedback on student assignments, specific goals for students to work on in written feedback (such as common mistakes they make or identify a specific skill the student is having trouble with), or a completed ASC Prescription form with goals for a tutoring session.
 - a. How many of you prefer to have personalized feedback from faculty in order to guide a student's tutoring session? _____
5. What resources do you point students to during a writing session?

- 6. From survey responses, we found tutors would also like to have certain resources available at the ASC, and we would like to confirm which resources would be used.
 - a. By a show of hands, how many of you would like to have the source material that students respond to in assignments on hand at the ASC? _____
 - b. And how many of you would like to have the texts for other courses in addition to ENG101 on hand at the ASC? _____
 - c. How about: recommended sources for approaching various lesson topics for students who have difficulty? _____
 - d. By a show of hands, how many of you would like to have more **worksheets** available at the ASC to help students attain specific skills? _____
 - i. How many of you use the outline worksheet? _____
 - ii. How many would use a grammar worksheet if one were developed? _____
 - iii. Which grammar topics should be prioritized in this worksheet?
 - iv. How many of you would use a citation worksheet for MLA? _____
 - v. How many of you would use a citation worksheet for APA? _____

D. Follow Up on Helping Students to Get the Most From their Tutoring Session:

From the tips that tutors have for students to get the most from their tutoring session that you saw today, the top priorities to communicate to students that were indicated in this session were:

_____, _____,
_____, & _____.

Also of concern from previous focus groups were:

_____ & _____.

- 1. What are some ways you have successfully dealt with some of the issues on this checklist that you would like to share with your colleagues?

2. How can we best get the word out to students about these issues?

E. Strategies for meeting our students' needs in other areas of the College:

Collaboration with Faculty:

1. How many of you agree with the following statement: There needs to be more clarity among faculty and students regarding the goals of the writing center. _____
2. Which goals of the writing center need to be clarified the most?

From the survey we found that tutors seek more opportunities to meet with instructors:

1. How many of you would attend professional development workshops with writing instructors? _____
2. How many would attend meetings to discuss instructor expectations for assignments?

3. How many would attend meetings to discuss student needs and progress? _____

Collaboration with the library:

1. What are some types of collaborations you can envision with the library to assist students in using library resources for their assignments?

2. How many of you would be willing to meet with the library to plan more methods of collaborating to help students? _____

F. Conclusion:

a. Are there any other topics you would like to discuss related to student learning in written communication?

b. Should the IDS 105: College Success course be required for all students? _____ Should it be required early in the student's enrollment?

Thank you very much for your participation. The Assessment Team will combine the information generated from all of the focus group sessions to recommend courses of action to the college leadership. We will keep you posted as this work progresses.