

Discipline-specific group writing tutorials: How and Why?

Dan Harvey

Lisa Haynes

Roger Graves

University of Alberta, Writing Across the Curriculum

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What is group tutoring?

- 2-30 students in a room (average = 5) with a graduate teaching assistant leading the discussion
- Attendance limited to students in one specific course
- Focus limited to one assignment in that course
- Agenda set by students who attend
- Often 3+ tutorials per course

Why

- 2008-2009: Creation and emergence of Centre for Writers (C4W)
- Success giving talks in classes about the specific writing assignment
- Promoted the C4W widely (postcards, posters, satiric video)
- This led to heavy bookings from scores of students from one class all working on the same assignment



Problem/opportunity

Tutors would see 5-10 students in one day from one class working on one assignment

Problem: The tutors would more or less repeat themselves several times each day

Opportunity: If we could gather all these students together, we could operate more efficiently (\$\$) and provide more variety to the tutoring experience

Opportunity

If we could gather all these students together, we could

- Operate more efficiently (\$\$)
- Provide more variety to the tutoring experience
- Improve the tutoring experience by having the tutor attend the class lectures

Theory

Students learn discipline-specific discourse through **interaction and activity** (Haas, qtd. In Rogers 2010)

Classroom discourse communities the only **real social context** students are aware of when they write (Beaufort, qtd. in Rogers 2010)

Class **discussion**, reading and **writing groups**, and **in-class modeling** promote learning (Chiseri-Strater, qtd. in Rogers 2010).

Stanford Study of Writing

Students developed through social interactions:

With dialogic interactions involving teachers and peers—
“writing focused conversations . . . that were ongoing, invited
active response . . . writers adjusted, synchronized, and
coordinated their writing with readers and teachers, as well
as disciplinary and professional communities of
practice” (Rogers 2010)

Class lectures

What they aren't:

- General
 - e.g., “How to Write in University,” “Top X Tips for Writing Success”
- Prescriptive
- >5 weeks in advance

What they are:

- Context-specific:
 - Discipline
 - Genre
 - Assignment/Instructor
- Descriptive
- “Just in time”

Approach

Lecturer as translator:

- Translate assignment to students
- Translate student knowledge to students
- Translate potential issues to instructor
 - “performance of ignorance”

Lecturer as guide:

- Model steps for completion
- Walk through example topic/thesis/etc.
- Point towards other resources



Sample Assignment

Science & Tech Studies 200: Argumentative essay

Choose one of the following “Questions for Critical Thought” to answer in your essay. Use the textbook and one “Suggested Reading” from the appropriate chapter to formulate your argument and write your essay. Proper citation and bibliographic practices are expected.

Topics:

- 1) Compare and contrast the theoretical view of technology as power with that of technology as mechanization.
- 2) Describe how the iPod feeds into the creation of a hyper-post- Fordist culture and how this is different from a Fordist Culture.
- 3) When comparing utopian and dystopian views of technology, which one do you think has more applicability to society today? Provide a rationale for your point of view.
- 4) What are the key premises of object and social affordances? Discuss how this framework applies to the use of Facebook.
- 5) Using QWERTY as an example, discuss the concept of nondiffusion. What are the types of socio-economic or cultural variables that can underpin nondiffusion?

Sample Assignment

Nursing 295: Community Health Assignment

Based on your clinical experiences:

1. Select your target group(s): this may be a family, an agency, or an aggregate(s).
2. Identify the models/strategies to be used when working with your selected target group(s): this may include the Ottawa Charter, Primary Health Care principles, McGill Model, etc.

Example of Initiatives may include:

- Working with a family to address a health concern.
- Working with a new mom's group and creating a program around post-partum issues.
- Planning and facilitating a health fair.
- Helping develop a health promotion teaching package for daycare programs.
- Assisting in the development of new agency specific programs.

Assignment Criteria:

- 6 - 7 pages in length, double-spaced, not including the title page, reference page, or appendices – goals/objectives/activities/expected outcomes table.

Sample assignment

NURS 390: Scholarly Paper

Take a position whether the Faculty of Nursing should keep the current position on identification or change the position to make your identification information less inclusive. Support your position with references to safety, professional, and legal requirements.

Assignment Format

Page 1: Title Information

Page 2: Abstract

Page 3-6: Introduction/Body of Paper/Conclusion

Page 7+: Reference List (Number of references is based on the discretion of the student)

The assignment

Develop a “Mission Statement for a Beginning Teacher in a Catholic School”

Your statement must include at least one reference from Scripture, a statement of mission (no more than four sentences), and a short (maximum three pages) reflection paper outlining how you would apply your mission statement in your practice as a beginning teacher.

Note: Catholic education understands that the Catholic worldview is explicitly present in every dimension of instruction and day-to-day life in a Catholic school.

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~graves1/documents/chrtc381.pdf>

Sample Lectures 2012/13

Faculties & Departments

- Nursing
- CHRTC
- English
- History
- Phys Ed & Recreation
- Art History
- Educational Psychology
- Law
- Religion Studies
- Science & Tech Studies
- Animal Science
- Comparative Literature
- Political Science
- Women's Studies
- Sociology
- Earth & Atmo Studies

Assignments

- Scholarly paper
- Pedagogy statement
- Literary analysis
- Research essay
- Self-discovery essay
- Conference proposal & paper
- Learning & development project
- **Legal factum**
- Essay
- Annotated bibliography
- Critical thought essay
- Research paper
- Response paper
- Textual analysis & assessment
- Abstract & research essay
- Review paper

Sample Lectures 2012/13

	# Lectures (with tutorials)	# Students	# Tutorials	# Students	Cost/ student (\$40 per hour)
2009/10	26	3709	n/a	n/a	n/a
2010/11	34 (12)	4000 (600)	50	90	\$22.20
2011/12	27 (14)	1500 (500)	60	137	\$17.50
2012/13	49 (30)	~3500 (1800)	102	476	\$8.50