

Peer Tutoring and the Writing Conference:

Creating connections between the
Writer and their Audience

Peer Tutoring Conferences

- How developing the peer/writer relationship in the classroom allows writers to better understand the importance of writing for their audience.
- The importance of the writing conference in developing better writers in that it assists them in understanding the ideas of choice and control in their writing.
- Concrete ways training students in peer tutoring techniques. This section will include how to allow students to talk about writing goals within the conference
- A clear demonstration in the steps involved in a peer conference.
- Possible ways to include reflection on editing into a writing class.

Think Pair Share

- What do you think are the benefits of Peer Tutoring?
- Think about how it helps the writing in the class and how it adds to other skills.

Benefits of Peer Tutoring

1. Crucial aspect of process writing
 - Can increase revision
2. Adds collaboration to your class
3. Makes writer aware of ‘audience’
4. Adds other skills to your writing class
5. Advice is more ‘student level’
6. Writers become more conscious of their ability to control the text

Choice and Control

The Writer

- Important that neither the teacher nor the tutor co-opts the writing.
- Students should understand that in the end they control their writing.
- They have the choice to make revisions.

The Peer Tutor

- Makes Suggestions
- Asks Questions
- Gives choices for every option
- Explains why they think the change is necessary

Think Pair Share

- How can Peer Tutoring help your students become better writers?
- What should be concentrating on during peer tutoring sessions?
- Difference between HOC's and LOC's...

Better Writers not Better Writing

Peer Tutors and Writing Conferences should concentrate on...

Higher Order Concerns

Main ideas, supports, details, transitions, sentence structure, word choice, engagement, structure, and anything that make the text better as a whole

Not Lower Order Concerns

Grammar, spelling, punctuation...and other surface level components of writing

What you should teach your peer tutors

Tutors need to be prepared to be effective. A good peer tutor program slowly builds up editing skills.

Students learn editing skills as you teach them about writing but you can begin with....

- PAW's
- What's Missing?
- Is it Needed?
- Will the Audience Understand?

“The tutor acts as the audience during the writing conference.”

Structures to Skills

Narrative	→	Focus
Descriptive	→	Tone
Example	→	Rule of 3
Process	→	General to Specific
Compare/Contrast	→	Purpose
Persuasive	→	Convincing

With each type of writing the students are adding something to their editing toolbox

How it looks in the classroom

In a lower level classroom, you can still introduce all aspects of process writing including the peer tutoring conference.

Captions allow students to work through the writing process while keep the writing simple.

Good sentences and effective sentence creation will allow students to build their writing skills before the move on to longer writing tasks

Two activities to promote sentence creation:

Core + Elements

Students start with a core SV sentence and slow add details.

Sentence Combining

Students create a list of simple sentences and combine them in a variety of different ways.

PAW's



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What's Missing?



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Is it Needed?



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How it looks in the classroom

The Writing Conference

Steps to a Writing Conference

1. Greet
2. Question (what's to be answered in the text)
3. Answer
4. Problems while writing (writer's thought)
5. Read (tutor reads to writer)
6. Edit
7. Promise (what the writer will work on)

Editing

Peer

- Suggest new words
- Suggest changes to sentence structure
- Asks questions
- Make reader statements
- Find the good points
- Encourage the writer and the changes

Writer

- Listen as objectively as possible
- Explain what they meant to say
- Interact with the suggestions
- See the gaps between text and audience

Scenario A

You are teaching an EAP intermediate class at an English language institute in Calgary. Many of your students are from China and you have asked them to keep a weekly email journal in which they send you and their classmates answers to particular questions. In both cases, they will receive responses. One of the questions is, "Describe any changes that have taken place in your life since you've arrived in Canada." Read the following email response and answer the questions below:

I already come to Canada 3 years. In those years I have changed a lot. When I go back to China, my friends told me I was different. At first, I think them just joking. But when I am thinking about my life before I came to Canada, I find it is true, I really change a lot. I learn a lot here, and some of them changes me.

First, when I was in China I don't like Canadian food, like cheese and salad. Because in China we cook the vegetable well done, and I think eat the vegetable before cook is not delicious. I'm very shock about Canadian doesn't eat a lot of vegetables that cooked. Now I eat Canadian and like Canadian food a lot, and sometimes try to cook Canadian food by myself. I eat meat and salad most of the dinnertime and the fruits always are bananas, apples and oranges.

Second, before I came to Canada, I always go out and play basketball with my friends. But now, I just stay at home and play computer game, do not go out and play basketball. I think I have become more and more lazy.

Third, the human touch is very strong here. In China, if you walk on the street it's very normal to see the people don't care about the other people. If you face to face the other people, they don't smile back or say something. In Canada, when you walk on the street you can see the people who was smile to you and chat about something. It's very happy and kind that I feel.

Although it's very different feeling and changes in here, I'm very happy that I can try new things. It can improve my knowledge and thinking.

QUESTIONS

1. What is your first impression of this response and how would you comment on the content?
2. What skills has this student already acquired with regard to language and conventions of writing?
3. What skills need to be addressed and how would you teach them?

Reflections on Peer Tutoring

Some important points to remember....

- Encourage editors to talk about ideas not the author.
- Stick with HOC's until the last edit when students can work on LOC's
- Part of a process....students will need to build editing skills and writing skills together
- Students need to build trust with each other
- Encourage editing teams to talk outside the classroom
- Encourage major changes if they are needed (writing is not gold)
- Develop writing circles
- Can introduce editing journals

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