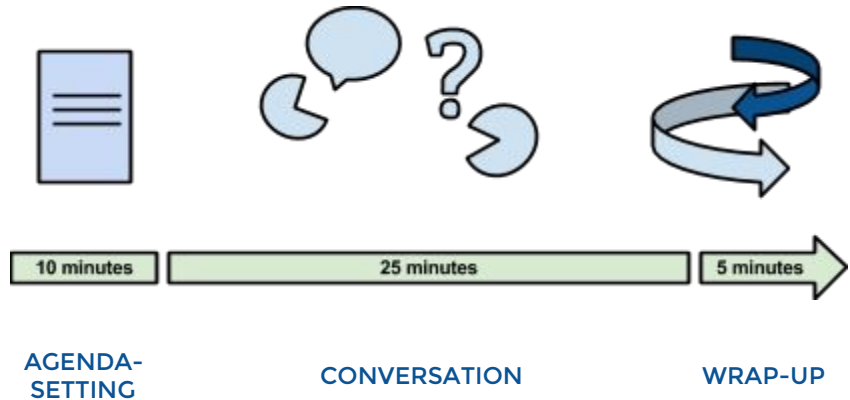


PROTOTYPICAL SESSION ARC

To stay simple, let's say a 40-minute writing session has three phases ➤



I: AGENDA-SETTING

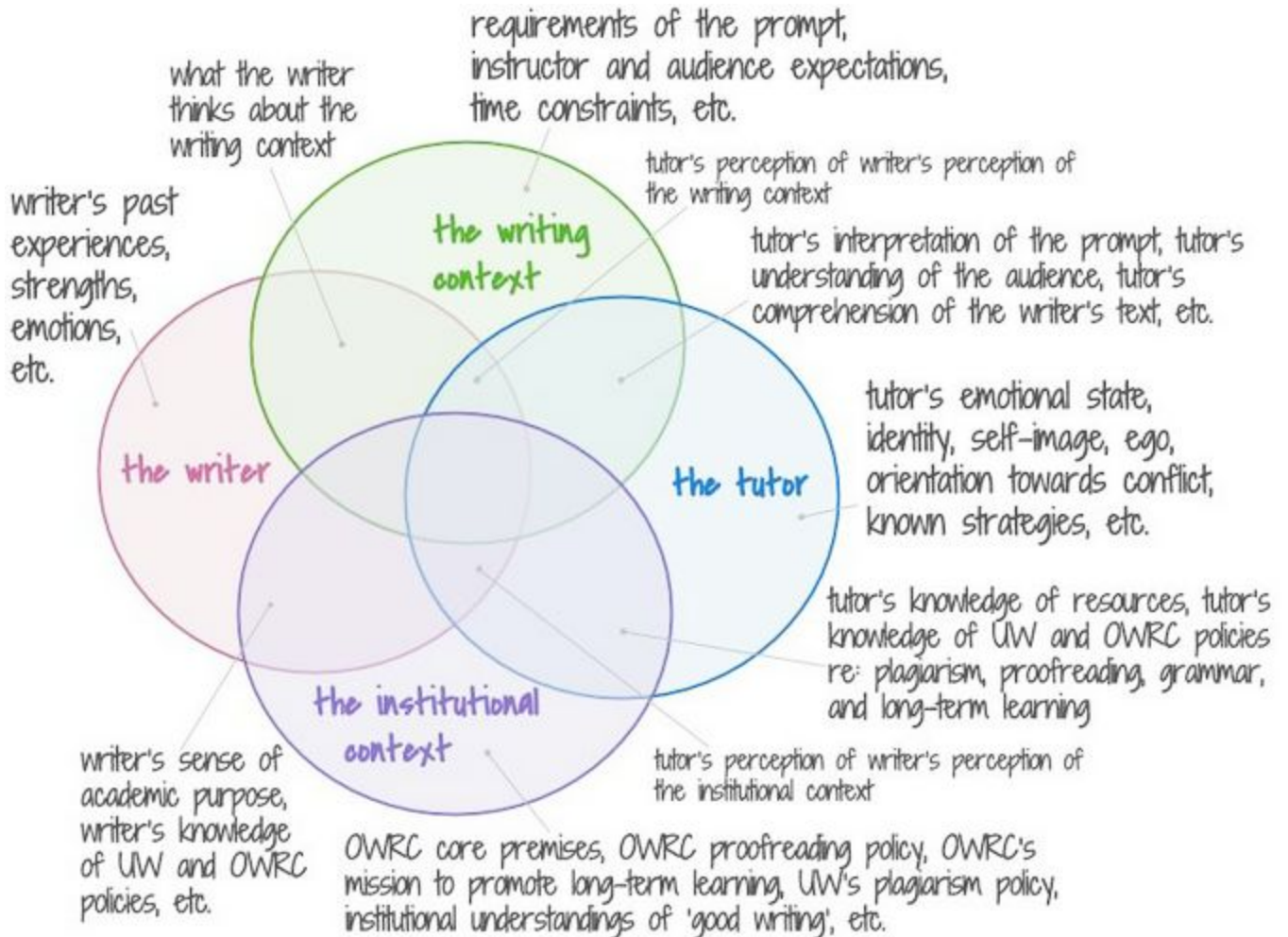
What is an agenda?

An **agenda** is a short list with a reasonable number of **concerns** to prioritize in a session. The agenda helps focus the conversation that follows. For example, an agenda might include concerns like ➤

integrating sources
interpret instructor feedback
strength of evidence
discuss organization

brainstorm based on the prompt
does the draft match the prompt
clarify logic
is the claim clear
sentences too long?

Where do concerns come from?



How do myriad concerns get translated into a feasible and helpful agenda?

The tutor might ask ‘what are you hoping to work on today?’ and the writer might give an answer. That’s just a start. Ultimately, the agenda is a product of **negotiation**.

The important point here is that the agenda isn’t determined by the first concerns a writer names. Nor is the agenda determined by what seems to *you* like a problem with the text. Instead, we negotiate. We explore and choose among many *possible* concerns, deliberately and transparently.

As a practical tip, negotiation is often easier when you can identify and discuss what **interests** are in play. Rather than **positions**; positions are people’s opinions about what will satisfy their interests. Interests (which could also be called ‘motives’ or ‘needs’) are deeper and more basic than positions ➤

Since there could be any number of different interests underlying a given position, and any number of positions that would satisfy a given interest, focusing on interests is often clarifying and productive. In our sessions we can *listen* for interests, pose *questions* to uncover interests, and *speak* in terms of our own interests. We can try to find common ground between interests, we can adjust positions to meet interests—we may even find that certain interests (our own or others’) get *deprioritized or met* simply as a result of discussing them.

One further note: the agenda is not fixed or finalized at the beginning of a session. You and the writer are *always* trying to arrive at a better understanding of what matters most in this writing situation, for this writer at this moment and for their development in the long-run.

The distinction between positions and interests is illustrated by this story. Pretend there is fruit bowl in the staff kitchen and that everything inside it is understood to be fair game. However, on this rare and fateful occasion, there is only one orange left and two people have arrived simultaneously to take it. Jacob wants the orange and he tells Cali so. Cali also wants the orange, she informs him in no uncertain terms, swearing like a pirate. Their positions are in conflict and it looks like Jacob will have to just grab the orange and run away as fast as he can, counting on Cali’s short legs to fail her. At the last moment, though, as Jacob is estimating the best route to the fruit bowl and then the door, Cali remembers to ask “Why do you want the orange, Jacob?” and he tells her that the orange is his only friend. Cali realizes that Jacob’s interest is companionship, so she offers to be his friend and then she satisfies her own underlying interest: a very specific hunger for the sickly sweet juice of an orange.

Categories and examples of interests:

acceptance	heard, understood, acknowledged, appreciated, belonging
aesthetics	beauty, inspiration, peace, contentment, celebration, order
autonomy	boundary, choice, consideration, emotional space, respect, privacy
connection	closeness, communication, empathy, friendship, fairness, reputation
integrity	authenticity, honesty, respect, purpose, responsibility, accountability
interdependence	community, consideration, cooperation, trust, support
nurturing	affection, caring, comfort, love
play	enjoyment, fun, relaxation
survival	air, emotional safety, food, water, health, physical safety
self-expression	contribution, creativity, mastery, work, professionalism
understanding	clarity, comprehension, consciousness, information, reflection, synthesis

Adapted from Rosenberg, M. (1999). Categories of Interests. In *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion*. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press

See also: Huitt, W. (2007). Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Retrieved from <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/regsys/maslow.html>

How might the gap between positions and interests show up when negotiating a session agenda?

Every time they book an appointment through our online form, writers are asked “what sort of help” they’re seeking. A recent study conducted by an OWRC research team found that, in a single week of sessions, approximately 27% of writers indicated “grammar” as their concern. That is, their initial position was seeking grammar help.

According to post-session tutor interviews, though, the actual concerns these sessions ended up revolving around were very different—presumably due to negotiations initiated by the tutor ➤

Top three concerns actually addressed:

- 17% clarity of ideas
- 14% organization, coherence
- 14% content, argumentation

Bottom three concerns actually addressed:

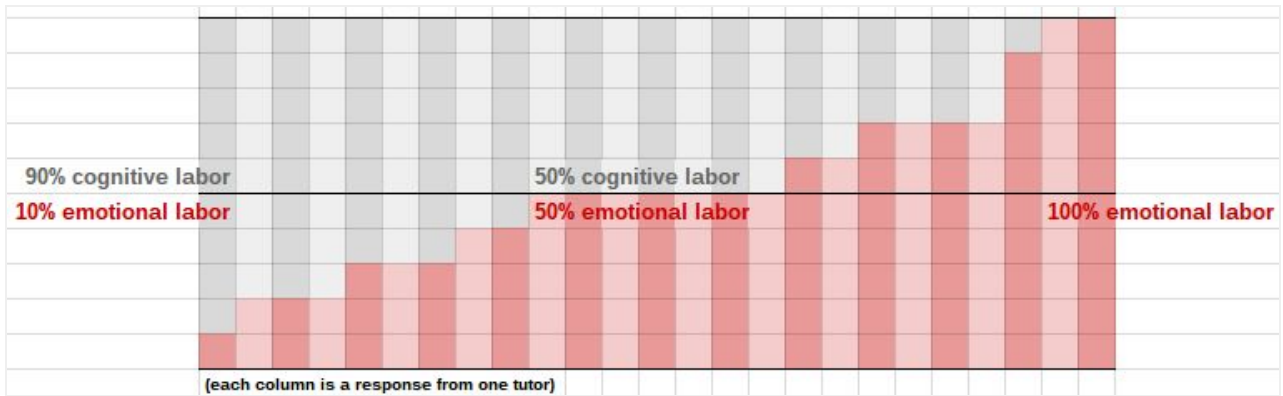
- 0.3% (i.e. one session) article use
- 0.3% commas
- 0.3% reasoning behind grammar

Chu, Y., Giurca, M., & Zhao, Y. Study conducted winter 2015 at the Odegaard Writing & Research Center, University of Washington.

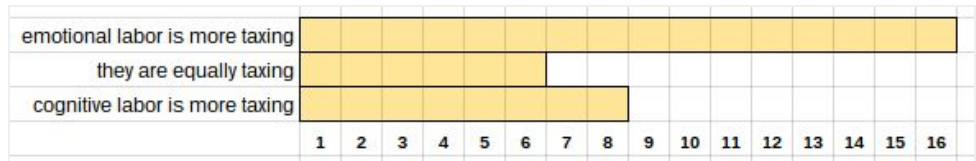
What might negotiating a session agenda feel like?

25 experienced OWRC tutors, surveyed anonymously via a text-in poll, reported the split between cognitive and **emotional labor** in their “typical” session as follows ➤

Bao, J., Burwell-Chen, A., Chelgren, J., Kopczick, C., Kovacs, J. & Wiley, E. Study conducted winter 2015 at the Odegaard Writing & Research Center, University of Washington.
 On emotional labor, see Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.



30 OWRC tutors reported their opinion on which form of labor—emotional or cognitive—was more “taxing” in a typical shift ➤

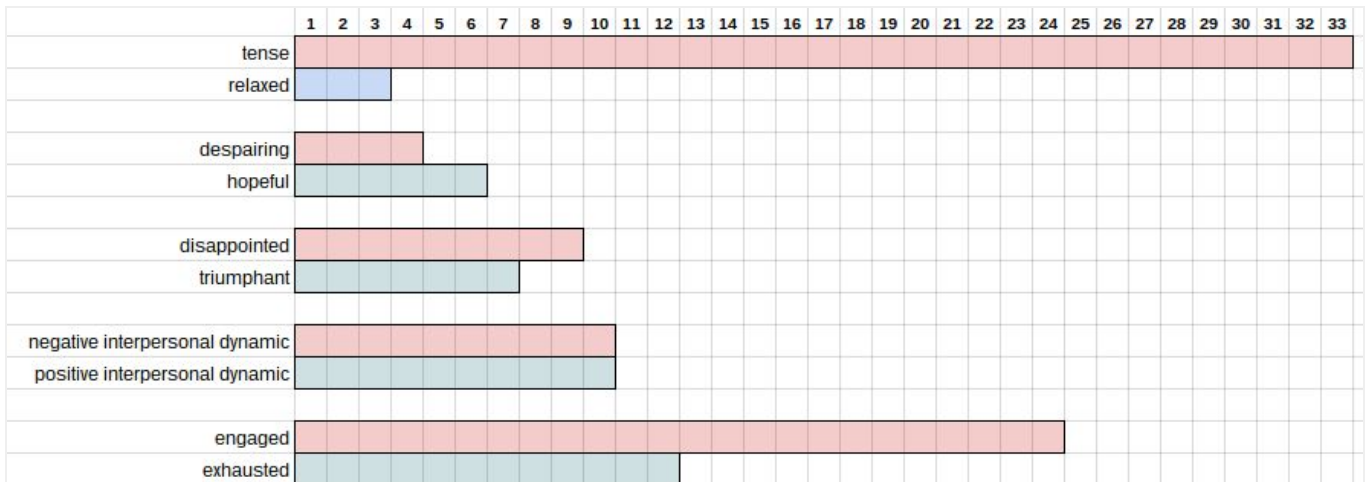


The same group of tutors offered words to describe the range of emotions they might experience in a typical shift. Data is presented here in two different ways.

First, in disaggregate form, where similar words have been grouped, creating 5 columns that are further split into ‘positive’ (pink/orange) and ‘negative’ (blue/green) dimensions ➤

Comfort	Determination	Celebratory	Appreciated	Eager
Relief	Hope	Crushed it	Collaborative	Enthusiasm
Anxiety	Resistance	Effervescent	Helpful	Excited
Apprehensive	Tenacious	Triumphant	Impressed	Happiness
AWKWARD!	Patient	YES!	Sympathetic	Joy
Cautious	Despair	Satisfaction	Warm	Engagement
Fear	Resignation	Disappointment	Protectiveness	Conscious
Worried	Disillusionment	Frustrated	Dismissed	Fulfillment
Unease	Impatience	Derpy	Intimidation	Curious
Trepidation			Self-conscious	Metacognitive
Tentative			Shame	Interested
Hesitant			Shy	Meh
Nervousness			Suspicious	Exhausted
Panic			Responsible for outcomes	Fatigued
Concern			Embarrassment	Weary
? ?			Anger	Tired
Confused				Lethargy

Second, in aggregate form, where clusters are reduced to a single word (e.g. “tense”) and items in each cluster are counted (including duplicates) ▼



One reason tutors' work is so taxing: the **process of inquiry**—and writing as one aspect of it—is an emotionally complex experience for most people, and writers bring varied emotions with them into their writing sessions ➤

Also fraught is allowing someone else to *participate* in your process of inquiry—perhaps especially in a competitive college context. So writers may feel real anxiety over the prospect of working with a tutor; writers may be defensive; writers may feel they need to 'test' the tutor to ensure they are safe or 'smart' enough to talk to.

Finally, tutoring is emotionally taxing because tutors must negotiate demands that feel irreconcilable. Conflict is always present in sessions; the sheer variety of goals and expectations, policies and positions that enter into a session makes it inevitable. Tutors often feel strong tension between the OWRC's stance on long-term learning and the institutional context of graded papers with strict due-dates. Or tutors feel torn between wanting to comply with the OWRC's proofreading policy and not wanting to disappoint a writer who comes in wanting editing services ➤

Stages of Kuhlthau's Information Search Process:

	initiation	selection	exploration	formulation	collection	presentation
affective	uncertainty	optimism	confusion, frustration, doubt	clarity	sense of direction/confidence	satisfaction or disappointment
cognitive	vague			focused	increased interest	
physical	seeking relevant information (exploring)				seeking pertinent information (documenting)	

Kuhlthau, C. C. (1989). Information Search Process: A Summary of Research and Implications for School Library Media Programs. *School Library Media Quarterly*, 18(1).

See also: Pretty-Jones, D. (2008). Emotions and the writing process. *CompTheory@UD* [blog]. Retrieved from <http://comptheoryatud.blogspot.com/2008/04/emotions-and-writing-process.html>

The frustration level at a recent writing center staff meeting rose with the first mention of tutoring non-native-English-speaking (NNES) students. "I try so hard to stick to the guidelines we learned, but it's so frustrating," said Blaise, one of the writing fellows. Neil, another tutor, agreed. "It's like being caught in a drain. I circle it and circle it, trying to avoid it, but by the end of the session I always get sucked down into line editing." ... One presenter lowered her voice and said she occasionally corrected specific grammar mistakes with students. "I screw it up every now and then," she said. "I feel guilty about it sometimes."

Blau, S., Hall, J., & Sparks, S. (2002). Guilt-Free Tutoring: Rethinking How We Tutor Non-Native-English-Speaking Students. *The Writing Center Journal*, 23(1), 23-44

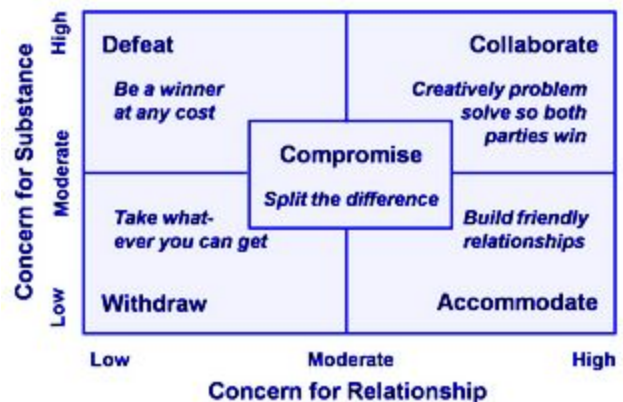
How might you cope with conflict in negotiating an agenda?

First, it helps to have a realistic expectations. Negotiation is not emotionally simple; sessions can be intense and stressful. It happens to all of us. It's not evidence of failure.

Second, it helps to have some inkling of what you tend to do (and might do instead) in tense situations. As a start, you could play this madlib with yourself, based on the **Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument** ➤

In this context [*family|workplace|classroom*], with my [*parents|siblings|boss|co-workers|friends|classmates|colleagues*], I favor the [*accommodate|avoid|compromise|collaborate|defeat*] style of engaging with conflicts. This style has the following advantages and disadvantages: ...

As a longer-term goal, please consider developing an appreciation for the value of conflict and of emotion more generally within writing sessions. It's completely possible to have rough patches that are fantastically productive, or rough patches that give way to smooth patches, or smooth patches that *feel* great, but aren't productive—so maybe a rough patch would've been better? Conflict *can* be an opportunity for intellectual and "moral growth and transformation", says Baruch-Bush and Folger, but you have to choose to engage with it before you can learn to engage with it productively and transformatively ➤



Amy E. Winans, advocating for "critical emotional literacy" in academia, offers this critique:

Traditionally, emotions have been ... treated as mere obstacles, as something to work past so that we can begin the real work of teaching and learning ... they have been presented as a distraction from the serious scholarly work of the mind.

Winans, A. (2012). Cultivating Critical Emotional Literacy: Cognitive and Contemplative Approaches to Engaging Difference. *College English*, 75(2).

See also: Baruch-Bush, R.A. & Folger, J. P. (1994). *The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment & Mediation*. CA: Jossey-Bass.
Geller, A. E., Eodice, M., Condon, F., Carroll M., & Boquet, E. (2007). Trickster at Your Table. In *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*. UT: USU Press.

How might writing standards, rules, and notions of correctness affect the session agenda?

As a center, we eschew the stance that *good writing* is a matter of following rules and *good learning* is a matter of being told those rules. This stance affects our hiring and training practices: we seek out thoughtful, empathetic and curious student peers who embrace the limits of their own knowledge, and we train in terms of principles rather than rules.

Now that you are a tutor, you don't need to start cracking the books. You don't need to re/learn formal rules of grammar, cram Strunk and White, or memorize the APA Stylebook so that you can evaluate writing vis-à-vis these standards. No need to prepare yourself to do something that isn't your job—and occasional writer requests notwithstanding, your job *isn't* to serve as an editor who imposes technical correctness or an expert who knows the answers. We believe that your own jargon-free description of your reaction to a text is valuable; your ability to grasp a point is a useful barometer of the clarity of a text; and your inclination to be persuaded or not by an argument is telling.

That said, for purposes of developing and sharing a richer descriptive vocabulary, here are two flexible schemas to support **naming and prioritizing textual concerns** in a session agenda. At the top, a division of concerns into higher-order or 'global' concerns and later- or lower-order concerns; at the bottom, learning outcomes for ENGL 111/121/131, the primary required writing classes on campus ➤

Higher-Order Concerns:

understanding of subject	Does the writer have a clear understanding of the importance, details, causes, and/or consequences of the subject being addressed?
thesis, claim or focus	Has the writer framed the piece with a clear focus, thesis or claim? Does the writer make clear the stakes (or significance) of the claim?
organization	Is the writer's structure and organization effective for this assignment? Do all the parts of the paper support the writer's purpose/thesis? Is there coherence between the units/paragraphs the writer has written?
evidence	Has the writer adequately supported assertions with appropriate evidence (e.g. scholarly articles, data or statistics, observations, anecdotes)? Is the evidence thoughtfully integrated into the argument?
development of argument	Are the writer's ideas fully-fledged, or do they require more elaboration and evidence? Do you have substantial objections to any of the writer's points?
rhetorical awareness	Is the writer making effective and controlled use of conventions and tone as appropriate for their target audience/purpose/discipline?

Later-Order Concerns:

sentence structure	Are there seriously awkward sentences or distracting problems with sentence variety, length, or syntax?
usage & mechanics	Are there serious, unintentional errors with standard academic English conventions, grammar, or spelling that interfere with comprehension?
citation	Are formatting and citation choices consistent, sufficient, and fitting?

Reigstad, T. J., & McAndrew, D. A. (1984). *Training Tutors for Writing Conferences*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
Gillespie, P. & Lerner, N. (2004). *Allyn & Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring* (2nd Ed.) New York: Pearson.

Outcomes for Expository Writing Program Courses at UW:

1. To demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts.

- ★ The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
- ★ The writer is able to demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences and contexts, both within and outside the university classroom.
- ★ The writing has a clear understanding of its audience, and various aspects of the writing (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice) address and are strategically pitched to that audience.
- ★ The writer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her writing choices.

2. To read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support writing.

- ★ The writing demonstrates an understanding of the course texts as necessary for the purpose at hand.
- ★ Course texts are used in strategic, focused ways (for example: summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the writing.
- ★ The writing is intertextual, meaning that a "conversation" between texts and ideas is created in support of the writer's goals.
- ★ The writer is able to utilize multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources (primary and secondary – for example, library research, interviews, questionnaires, observations, cultural artifacts) in order to support writing goals.
- ★ The writing demonstrates responsible use of the MLA (or other appropriate) system of documenting sources.

3. To produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts.

- ★ The argument is appropriately complex, based in a claim that emerges from and explores a line of inquiry.
- ★ The stakes of the argument, why what is being argued matters, are articulated and persuasive.
- ★ The argument involves analysis, which is the close scrutiny and examination of evidence and assumptions in support of a larger set of ideas.
- ★ The argument is persuasive, taking into consideration counterclaims and multiple points of view as it generates its own perspective and position.
- ★ The argument utilizes a clear organizational strategy and effective transitions that develop its line of inquiry.

4. To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing.

- ★ The writing demonstrates substantial and successful revision.
- ★ The writing responds to substantive issues raised by the instructor and peers.
- ★ Errors of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics are proofread and edited so as not to interfere with reading and understanding the writing.

II. CONVERSATION

Inside the session, our main mode of working is conversing. This is not trivial; this is an ethical statement. Back-and-forth conversation is a hopeful-egalitarian act. It is also an insistence that learning can be social and mutual—not a private or competitive activity ➤

Creating a focused and genuine conversation takes effort. It is not easy nor automatic. Fostering deep conversations is the job of the tutor.

What kinds of conversations do we try to create?

Some ways we naturally converse are not—for our purposes—always as helpful as they seem. These moves can diminish the potential learning value of conversations; they are **directive**, not reflective ➤

Other communication moves are **reflective** and often support rich, transferrable learning ➤

The language here is deliberate: in *directive* conversation, the tutor directs, leads and guides. In *reflective* conversation, the tutor is mirroring the writer, drawing out and magnifying the writer's thoughts. Each approach has its time and place; we focus on reflection because it is so comparatively rare, and often so emotionally challenging to put into practice (perhaps because of the desire to appear, or be, an expert? perhaps because of the inclination to troubleshoot when presented with others' problems? perhaps because it's easier to comply with writers' requests for directive advice than it is to negotiate?).

As we consider reflective communication, be aware that communication is culturally-, individually- and situationally-dependent; it doesn't follow universal rules. Everything presented here is meant to expand your awareness of options, not to suggest that good communication looks like one thing only. Without wanting to essentialize, it seems true that communication is saturated in cultural, gender, class and race codes. In ways that are not possible to predict, your identity and your writer's identity matter within the session. Be especially aware of the complexity of nonverbal gestures. For example, eyes may be averted as a gesture of respect, a sign of boredom, an indication of shyness, etc. In the absence of rules and in the presence of such variety, tutors should be slow to make judgements and quick to adjust.

Reflective thinking is something we learn to do, and we learn to do it from and with other people. We learn to think reflectively as a result of learning to talk ... The first steps to learning to think better are to learn to converse better and to learn to create and maintain the sort of social contexts, the sorts of community life, that foster the kinds of conversations we value.

Bruffee, K. (1984). Peer Tutoring and the "Conversation of Mankind". In *Writing Centers: Theory and Administration* (Ed. G. A. Olson). National Council of Teachers of English.

See also: Barnes, D. (2010). Why Talk Is Important. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 9(2), 7-10.
Duffy, J. (2012). Virtues of Conversation. *Another Word*. Retrieved from <http://writing.wisc.edu/blog/?p=2652>
Harris, M. (1995). Talking in the Middle: Why Writers Need Writing Tutors. *College English*, 57(1), 27-42.

North, S. (1982). Training Tutors to Talk About Writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 33(4), 434-441.

Directive conversational moves:

- evaluating** disagreeing, agreeing, criticizing, blaming, diagnosing, praising
- solving** ordering, moralizing, advising, interrogating, problem-solving
- withdrawing** logical arguing, denying feelings, empty reassurance, diverting

Katz, N. & McNulty, K. (1994). *Reflective Listening*. Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs. Retrieved from [www.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/parcc/cmc/Reflective Listening NK.pdf](http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/parcc/cmc/Reflective%20Listening%20NK.pdf)

Guiding principle for reflective conversation:

[L]imit your talking to things that will contribute to getting the fullest informational and emotional content from the speaker.

—Jane Yates (2004)

Reflective conversational moves, defined thoroughly below:

- questions** carefully crafted invitations to think and speak
- bodily awareness** sensitivity to nonverbal cues
- active listening** keen attentiveness to what is expressed
- silence** creating space for the writer to think and speak
- acknowledging** gentle signals that you are listening
- summarizing** succinct version of a writer's lengthy remarks
- reflecting** 'holding up a mirror' for the writer to interact with
- reframing** offering purposeful variations on the writer's themes

Katz, N. & McNulty, K. (1994). *Reflective Listening*. Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs. Retrieved from [www.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/parcc/cmc/Reflective Listening NK.pdf](http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/parcc/cmc/Reflective%20Listening%20NK.pdf)
Yates, J. (2004). Teaching Note: Active Listening and Reflective Response. MIT Sloan Communication. Retrieved from <http://www.bssve.in/StudyMaterials/MMT11.pdf>

questions	bodily awareness	active listening	silence	acknowledging	summarizing	reflecting	reframing
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Different **questions** ask writers to perform different cognitive tasks. Bloom's revised taxonomy ranks cognitive tasks from least to most difficult (easiest to remember, most difficult to create) ➤

It's helpful to know what level of thinking your question demands—and to be able to formulate more or less demanding questions depending on a writer's initial response. This is called **scaffolding**: starting easy and building up to a more difficult task in logical, manageable increments ➤

In addition, it may be helpful to reference this practitioner's typology of questions, generating your own examples of each type and considering their different possible impacts within a session ▼

Definitions of cognitive tasks:

- remember** recognizing and recalling facts
- understand** understanding what facts mean
- apply** applying the facts, rules, concepts and ideas
- analyze** breaking down information into component parts
- evaluate** judging the value of information or ideas
- create** combining parts to make a new whole

Adapted from Shabatura, J. (2013). Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Write Effective Learning Outcomes. University of Arkansas. Retrieved from <http://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/>

Examples of questions targeting different cognitive tasks:

- remember** *What has the instructor said about claims?*
- understand** *What parts of the instructor's comments made sense?*
- apply** *What helps most with this particular assignment?*
- analyze** *What does the prompt suggest about a good claim?*
- evaluate** *(How) is your claim already fulfilling the prompt?*
- create** *What could you add to make this claim more complex?*

Definitions of different types of questions:

- fact-gathering** asking the writer to share details about their learning situation (the requirements and context)
- transfer in** supporting the writer in assessing the relevance of their past work and applying it to the present situation
- open-ended** inviting the writer to describe their goals, feelings, and concerns; phrased to prevent a yes/no answer
- non-writing-related** building rapport and uncovering the writer's sense of connection with their work
- leading** leading the student to uncover the rationales underpinning academic conventions
- clarifying** checking the student's intentions against our own comprehension
- depth of thought** exploring assumptions/implications that are underdeveloped and logic that is faulty or incomplete
- self-assessment** inviting the writer to generate and/or apply nuanced criteria to assess their own work (moving past sweeping judgements like "I'm a good writer/I'm a bad writer")
- transfer out** supporting the writer in planning next steps

Examples of different types of questions:

- fact-gathering** *What is your assignment prompt on Sherman Alexie asking you to do? Which of his texts are you expected to incorporate? When is the assignment due? How far along in the writing process are you?*
- transfer in** *Have you ever written something like this before? Were you proud of it? What's different about this assignment compared to that prior assignment? What part of this feels new and intimidating?*
- open-ended** *How do you feel about what you have written so far for your paper on William Shakespeare? What are you hoping to accomplish in this session?*
- non-writing-related** *What's your major? Is this class in your major? Are you excited/bored/ intimidated by your course text and the subject of Japanese pop culture?*
- leading** *Academic writers traditionally reference sources to substantiate their claims. I see you have chosen to cite Beyonce's lyrics. Is this a scholarly source? Are there other academic texts you are planning to use to back up your argument, such as a class reading or scholarly article?*
- clarifying** *It looks like you're trying to say that Lady Gaga's meat dress played a significant role in expressing her social ideals. Is that what you're going for here? I understand the example, but how does it connect to your original argument about the 'political correctness' of Michelle Obama's designer wardrobe?*
- depth of thought** *You appear to be arguing that Britney Spears didn't need to go to counseling because Lindsay Lohan didn't go to counseling. Why have you chosen Lohan as the barometer of 'what should be done' in this situation? Is your audience likely to view this reasoning as sound? Why or why not? What academic sources, if any, would you use to support your claim that Britney didn't need to go to counseling?*
- self-assessment** *What are your goals for this paper? What do you think 'good writing' is? You said that clarity was important to you; are there sections of this paper that you think are unclear?*
- transfer out** *Now that we've discussed your analysis of the film The Dark Knight, does this answer your question from the beginning of the session about how to form a complex claim? What are you planning to do first for revision? How do you think you might apply these particular concepts to future papers?*

Some thoughts on the general value and impact of questions in a session ➤

- ★ they encourage a collaborative environment in which both writer and tutor play the role of informant
- ★ they help the tutor avoid making erroneous assumptions about what's going on
- ★ they help the tutor avoid imposing their own meaning on what the writer is trying to communicate
- ★ they emphasize the importance of the writer's ideas and show respect to them as a thinker
- ★ in answering a question, the writer has *already begun* the work of inquiry, creation and revision

QUESTIONING:

- I am aware of it
- I understand it
- I can do it ➤
- I could teach it ➤
- It's uncomfortable: it feel strange, risky, difficult
- It's *too* comfortable: it's a habit, a reflex, a thoughtless gesture
- It's a choice: it's an adaptation to specific situations

questions	bodily awareness	active listening	silence	acknowledging	summarizing	reflecting	reframing
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In an environment that privileges intellect and words above all else, we learn to ignore many important nonverbal/physical cues that might help us understand someone better.

Bodily awareness includes awareness of your own body, how it feels and how it may be read by others; it includes awareness of others' nonverbal cues as well ➤

Awareness of your own body:

- posture and stance** "display your openness by angling yourself toward other people, sitting or standing with an upright (but not stiff) posture, and uncrossing your arms"
- eye contact** "the key to great eye contact is knowing when to look away and when to return to someone's eyes—like after you finish a sentence or when they are beginning to speak"
- self-comfort gestures** "putting your hand to your face (especially over your mouth), foot or finger tapping, picking cuticles or biting nails can all be read as signs of discomfort or disinterest"
- muscle & tendon tension** "demanding jobs, poor posture, stress, repetitive motion, and the use of poor body mechanics can all lead to muscle tension"
- body temperature** spikes in body temperature correspond to fight-or-flight responses
- breathing** shallow breathing is both a symptom of and a contributor to anxiety
- facial expressions** softening your face can affect the overall tension of your body

Awareness of others:

- physical signs** apparent energy level, posture, facial expression, proximity
- vocal signs** tone, speech rate, volume, inflection

BODILY AWARENESS:

- I am aware of it
- I understand it
- I can do it ➤
- I could teach it ➤
- It's uncomfortable: it feel strange, risky, difficult
- It's *too* comfortable: it's a habit, a reflex, a thoughtless gesture
- It's a choice: it's an adaptation to specific situations

questions	bodily awareness	active listening	silence	acknowledging	summarizing	reflecting	reframing
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Active listening is, first, a mindset that assumes listening can always be done better ➤

Active listening is, second, an open, accepting, respectful and generous mindset towards other people that starts with the assumption they have something important to say.

Active listening is, lastly, self-critical and aware of when the quality of one's listening has deteriorated; it is proactive in removing **barriers** to good listening ➤

Ingesting sound bytes, axioms, and policies is easy; it is learning to unlearn, learning to be flexible in the face of newness, and learning deep listening that is hard.

—Anne Ellen Geller et al., "The Trickster at Your Table" (2007)

The dominant trend in our field has been to follow the lead of popular culture and naturalize listening—to assume it is something everyone does but no one need study.

—Krista Ratcliffe, "Rhetorical Listening" (1999)

Environmental and physical barriers to effective listening include furniture placement, environmental noise such as sounds of traffic or people talking, physiological noise such as a sinus headache or hunger, and psychological noise such as stress or anger.

Cognitive barriers to effective listening include the difference between speech and thought rate that allows us 'extra room' to think about other things while someone is talking and limitations in our ability or willingness to concentrate or pay attention.

Personal barriers to effective listening include a lack of listening preparation, poorly structured and/or poorly delivered messages, and prejudice.

There are several **bad listening practices** that we should avoid, as they do not facilitate effective listening:

Interruptions that are unintentional or serve an important or useful purpose are not considered bad listening. When interrupting becomes a habit or is used in an attempt to dominate a conversation, then it is a barrier to effective listening.

Distorted listening occurs when we incorrectly recall information, skew information to fit our expectations or existing schemata, or add material to embellish or change information.

Aggressive listening is a bad listening practice in which people pay attention to a speaker in order to attack something they say.

Narcissistic listening is self-centered and self-absorbed listening in which listeners try to make the interaction about them by interrupting, changing the subject, or drawing attention away from others.

Pseudo-listening is “fake listening,” in that people behave like they are paying attention and listening when they actually are not.

Unnamed Author. (n.d.). Barriers to Effective Listening. In *A Primer on Communication Studies*. Unnamed Publisher (Creative Commons). Retrieved from <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/a-primer-on-communication-studies/index.html>

ACTIVE LISTENING:

- I am aware of it
- I understand it
- I can do it >
- I could teach it >
- It's uncomfortable: it feel strange, risky, difficult
- It's *too* comfortable: it's a habit, a reflex, a thoughtless gesture
- It's a choice: it's an adaptation to specific situations

questions	bodily awareness	active listening	silence	acknowledging	summarizing	reflecting	reframing
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Some thoughts on the value and impact of **silence** in a session >

- ★ gives tutor and writer a chance to check in with yourselves physically (to monitor stress levels)
- ★ ‘hands the ball’ back to the writer if the session seems to have become overly your responsibility
- ★ observes the gravity of something: a particularly strong emotion, an especially beautiful insight, etc.
- ★ gives the writer room to consider a question and craft a response
- ★ breaks the pace of the academic environment, underscoring that we don’t have to be endlessly productive

SILENCE:

- I am aware of it
- I understand it
- I can do it >
- I could teach it >
- It's uncomfortable: it feel strange, risky, difficult
- It's *too* comfortable: it's a habit, a reflex, a thoughtless gesture
- It's a choice: it's an adaptation to specific situations

questions	bodily awareness	active listening	silence	acknowledging	summarizing	reflecting	reframing
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Acknowledging consists of brief, gentle signals that you’re listening >

- e.g. *right, OK, sure, mmm hmmm, cool, go on*
- e.g. nodding, audible intake of breath, frowning thoughtfully, smiling

ACKNOWLEDGING:

- I am aware of it
- I understand it
- I can do it >
- I could teach it >
- It's uncomfortable: it feel strange, risky, difficult
- It's *too* comfortable: it's a habit, a reflex, a thoughtless gesture
- It's a choice: it's an adaptation to specific situations

questions	bodily awareness	active listening	silence	acknowledging	summarizing	reflecting	reframing
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Summarizing is the act of boiling down a writer’s lengthy remarks into something shorter, more focused, more succinct and parsimonious. Some thoughts on the value and impact of summarizing in a session >

- ★ can help writers who ‘ramble’ to focus, when focus is needed
- ★ communicates your sense of what’s important from within all that was said
- ★ magnifies the writer’s own expression of what was important
- ★ formally wraps-up one phase in the conversation and moves on to the next

SUMMARIZING:

- I am aware of it
- I understand it
- I can do it ➤
- I could teach it ➤
- It's uncomfortable: it feel strange, risky, difficult
- It's *too* comfortable: it's a habit, a reflex, a thoughtless gesture
- It's a choice: it's an adaptation to specific situations

questions	bodily awareness	active listening	silence	acknowledging	summarizing	reflecting	reframing
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Reflecting is 'holding up a mirror' for the writer to interact with. Reflecting entails echoing the essential content of the writer's statements and, importantly, naming your perception of their emotional state ➤

Some thoughts on the value and impact of reflecting in a session ➤

Templates for reflecting statements:

- You feel [feeling] because [content]*
- You feel [feeling] about [content]*
- You feel [feeling] when [content]*
- You feel [feeling] that [content]*

Examples of reflecting statements:

- You're worried that your professor will hate this, because she said something in lecture about ...*
- When you get a comment like that you feel discouraged, like all the work you've done is wasted*
- You're proud of this section, of all the sources you found and managed to weave together*
- You're confused and frustrated because so many of your sources contradict each other*

- ★ helps you check your own understanding
- ★ helps the writer pinpoint the gaps in meaning where their message isn't getting across
- ★ forces you to listen more carefully if you expect to be making reflecting statements
- ★ takes pressure off you (i.e., the feeling that you have to contribute content for their paper)
- ★ opens up a space to address emotion (you signal to the writer it's OK to say more about their feelings)
- ★ often helps the person being mirrored to build on their insights; it gives them momentum
- ★ alternatively, it can help slow down or ground a writer's thoughts
- ★ reassures the writer that they're making *some* sense to *someone*, even if their current draft falls short

REFLECTING:

- I am aware of it
- I understand it
- I can do it ➤
- I could teach it ➤
- It's uncomfortable: it feel strange, risky, difficult
- It's *too* comfortable: it's a habit, a reflex, a thoughtless gesture
- It's a choice: it's an adaptation to specific situations

questions	bodily awareness	active listening	silence	acknowledging	summarizing	reflecting	reframing
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While reflecting is about replaying the writer's meanings back to them as faithfully as you can, **Reframing** is a highly intentional alteration of the writer's comments. In reframing, the tutor chooses words that are near synonyms, yet come with significantly different connotations ➤

Reframing is done to neutralize or soften remarks from a third party (like an instructor); to offer new interpretations; to promote consideration of other options, actions, and opinions so writers don't stay entrenched in a certain way of seeing things. Reframing is an inherently risky and arguably arrogant act. Do it when you've built plenty of trust and rapport; keep in mind that your attempt to reframe could be premature or entirely misguided. Be ready and quick to re-reframe or apologize if the writer is offended by your intervention!

Writer: *I feel like it's a little misleading that I start talking about X but my paper isn't about X at all. **

Tutor: *It's surprising to the reader. What connections led you from X to the topics in the rest of your paper?*

Note the substitution of "surprising" for "misleading" and the subsequent question that implies a submerged *logic*, rather than a desire to mislead, on the part of the writer. This is done to suggest a more positive narrative about the writer's own process, to promote the writer's self-confidence in their own instincts, and to encourage the practice of taking seriously and analyzing one's own instincts.

* Writer quote courtesy of Roberta Kjesrud, Director of the Writing Center at Western Washington University

REFRAMING:

- I am aware of it
- I understand it
- I can do it ➤
- I could teach it ➤
- It's uncomfortable: it feel strange, risky, difficult
- It's *too* comfortable: it's a habit, a reflex, a thoughtless gesture
- It's a choice: it's an adaptation to specific situations

III. WRAP-UP

Throughout the session but especially at its conclusion, it's good to look back at what happened, perhaps by revisiting the agenda or by asking the writer what are their main takeaways from the session. And it's good to look forward, asking writers what are their next steps and how, in some detail, do they plan to execute those next steps?

These actions support **transfer**, which is the cognitive work of bringing skills learned in one context to bear in another context. In a new situation, knowing what skills to use from previous situations can be very difficult. However, research has shown metacognitive reflection on the skills learned and simple recognition that a skill might be useful in the future are two steps that help make learning accessible in subsequent situations.

A focus on transfer is essential if we are to work towards the OWRC's mission of developing confident writers with sustainable, life-long inquiry processes. Such a focus includes the recognition that transfer is *already* present in a session, perhaps (as in the cases of overzealous and negative transfer) interfering with current learning ➤

[Discussing] how, when, and why to apply [strategies] is essential to transfer ... transfer is supported when instruction helps learners understand the general principles underlying [any] specific examples ...

Pellegrino, J. W., & Hilton, M. L., Eds. (2012). *Education for Life and Work: Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century*. Committee on Defining Deeper Learning and 21st Century Skills; Center for Education; Board on Testing and Assessment; Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education; National Research Council.

Overview of different types and levels of transfer:

- positive** *When learning in one context improves learning or performance in another context*
- negative** *[W]hen previous learning or experience inhibits or interferes with learning or performance in a new context*
- simple vs. complex** *Simple transfer happens when little or no effort is required to apply what has been learned in one situation to a new situation [and the opposite for complex transfer]*
- near vs. far** *[T]hese terms distinguish the closeness or distance [or dis/similarity] between the original learning and the transfer task*
- automatic vs. mindful** *When an individual responds spontaneously within a transfer situation, which is very similar to the learning situation then this is automatic transfer ... In contrast, mindful [or] high road transfer is deliberate and involves conscious thought and intellectual effort, and occurs in situations where there are significant gaps or differences between the original and the transfer situations*
- overzealous** *Of particular concern are situations where students transfer skills, knowledge, and routines that are effective for the task at hand but may nevertheless be suboptimal in the long run because they block additional learning. We will call this overzealous transfer (OZT)—people transfer solutions that appear to be positive because they are working well enough, but they are nevertheless negative with respect to learning what is new.*

Leberman, S., McDonald, L., & Doyle, S. (2006). *The Transfer of Learning: Participants' Perspectives of Adult Education and Training*. Burlington, VT: Gower Publishing Company.

Schwartz, D. L., Chase, C. C., & Bransford, J. D. (2012). Resisting Overzealous Transfer: Coordinating Previously Successful Routines With Needs for New Learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 47(3).