

January 2008

Salt Lake Community College



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What Works for Me

A peer-to-peer tutoring collaborative sponsored by the Learning Center

Introducing...

On Friday January 7th, the Learning Center hosted a training for tutors and learning support staff at the College. We heard from representatives from the Disability Resource Center, Trio/ Student Support Services, Focused Tutoring and The International Center.

Each of these representatives was invited to introduce or reintroduce their services and describe exactly what is offered through their programs. We hoped to provide a welcoming path for tutors from many pro-



grams to learn what services are available College wide. Following is a summary:

The Disability Resource Center offers services for students including: early registration, adaptive assistant technology, ASL interpreters, learning strategies training for people with learning disabilities (learn the process of how to learn, read effectively, process information), free study skills workshops (time management, note taking, etc.), accommodating special testing needs, texts on tape or enlarged texts, self advocacy, physical accessibility, and refer-

als to community agencies.

The Math Department has a Math Lab and is located in the basement of the SI building. The tutors assist students in one-to-one live sessions, small group sessions and virtual sessions. They also assist students with Maple and other math programs required for Math classes. Their hours are Mon –Thurs 8-8 and Friday 8-4.

The Science Resource Center in the SI Building offer tutoring in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Tutoring available in the Science is supplied by volunteer tutors at this time.

Focused Tutoring offers free

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Advisory Board Seeks Members!

- *What Works for Me* is seeking members for the advisory board.
- The advisory board consist of tutors from Salt Lake Community College who volunteer one or two hours a month to make editorial and content choices for the monthly publication.
- If you are interested, please contact Christie Hall at 957-3261 or Christie.hall@slcc.edu

What is a Refugee Student?

A student is a refugee if they have immigrated to the U.S. from a politically charged or war-torn area. Usually, a refugee is granted this status because they are believed to be in imminent danger if they return to their native country. Refugee students are not all

the same. They vary widely in

their backgrounds as much as any other immigrant. Some have significant educational backgrounds, coming here with degrees and histories of prestigious jobs in medicine, law, teaching and other professions.

On the other hand, some refugees are immigrants arriving with no literacy skills, possibly because their native language does not have a written form. Their cultural differences are many.

Refugee students have only one thing in common: political asylum in the U.S. Therefore, we need to remember not to categorize students'

Meet Jennifer Hunt of the Learning Center at Redwood, Jordan and Sandy *What relationships have altered since becoming a tutor and how have they assisted you as a professional?*

First, I'll give some background about myself; I struggled in Junior High with choosing my career. I was especially frustrated about math at that time because I had already passed both of my parents' levels of math. I had some bad experiences with one particular teacher, being ridiculed for asking too many questions, so I stopped soon after and felt math was hard all the way through high school. Upon entering college, I was afraid of math, but soon after, I stopped thinking of math as a four letter word because it was required for at least three classes before getting an associates degree and because of some relationships and strategies I learned.

I started to think about how to build relationships in a support system to help me

out. I learned to read the text book, and that has helped me in my tutoring now. I decided that I was going to continue on. I learned to work in groups in 1050. That has helped me learn that that was the best for me and now I know that could be the best for some of my own students.

During 1050, I started asking questions again in college. I really want to know how to make this work for me and I need to use numbers everywhere. If I can do these little things, why can't I do the big complex things? One day a student in my group asked me "Have you ever thought of tutoring math?" She didn't understand why I laughed, but she didn't realize how hard I had always struggled at it. I told her "no." She said "but you're so good at it!"

She was one of the first people who had told me "Hey, you had this bad experience but you are good at math and it's time to move on." I remember that experience of my own and use it in my own tutoring. When my students struggle I can say "Hey, you got a D on this. No big deal. Let's put it behind us because there's more to learn."

I also learned a strategy of relating to others called the "Post-it" method. It works for private tutoring and group tutoring. When they say something negative, you write something opposite and positive, slap that post-it in their book and move on. They come across it in review and it reinforces positive thoughts for them each time they see it.

Meet John Steiner of the Learning Center at Redwood *How have you altered your communication strategies since becoming a tutor at SLCC? What brought about those new strategies?*

At the start of my tutoring a lot of uncertainties entered my mind more about knowing the material of the subjects I'd tutor. For a while having to go through student's books to remind myself was frequent. I originally believed if only I knew the subject I'm good. However, certain words or phrasing of ideas occasionally confused some students. I knew, obviously, not to talk down to a student, but that was easy when I myself was trying to figure out some concepts myself. At first, certain courses that I had I just didn't tutor because I remembered so little of those. At times I simply resorted to repeating the way a textbook detailed a concept or proc-

ess, only to find that the way a text is written isn't often the most layman friendly language.

Something had to change.

The key emerged when trying to explain the three dimensional geometry of a molecule to one student. The appearance of that geometry on a flat page didn't make sense to them. While explaining the lines representing above or below the plane of the page my eye wandered to flag dowels we have students use. Plucking them up I arranged them into a shape meant to represent the molecular bonds. In later weeks I grew more adept at using my hands to show a molecule's

shape with the use of a dowel when needed. It gave a real world impression that students could follow.

More importantly, this brought a new sense of confidence. It also got me thinking about language in academics. The use of 'correct' instead of 'right' as one example. This problem arises not just with ESL students but those whose first language is English.

Hand gestures, strangely enough, even helped relate ideas to visually orientated students. To be sure of the best suited means of communication I asked about other courses a student had - **Continued on p. 4**

Meet Linda Richard of the DRC *What has changed about your view of learning, study skills or teaching since you began tutoring at SLCC? How did that happen?*

One thing I have learned by observing tutors is to go at the students pace. I was very impressed while observing tutoring in the ESL lab and how excited the student was to learn when the tutor took the lead of the tutee. I believe there was some real learning going on there.

This coincides with what Dianne Vardiman talked about during our interview together.

She was the previous Learning Strategist here at the Disability Resource Center (DRC). According to Dianne, one of the most effective skills as a Learning Strategist is to be able to listen to the student, to what their needs are and take their lead.

This reminds me of a time when I was making an appointment with someone over the phone and I didn't understand what area the

location of the appointment was in that she was talking about. I interrupted her, asking a question and she said, "That's what I'm telling you." I needed her to back up to a place where I could relate to what she was saying. She was in a hurry and didn't do that and therefore, I couldn't find the place and missed the appointment. - **Continued on p. 4**



Meet Clint Johnson of the Student Writing Center *What drew you into tutoring for SLCC?*

Two things attracted me to tutoring: first, it was a way to get a small taste of what teaching might be like; and second, it was a challenge.

I was a struggling freelance writer well before I returned to school, so I already considered writing my profession. Like most writers, I knew that I had to have a backup occupational plan but like many "artists", I was skeptical of teaching. I questioned whether I had the patience and knowledge to teach. In this regard, tutoring has been a real revelation. I found I enjoy working with students and they benefit from our shared effort. Seeing them learn and improve is a joy; it's not just encouraging, it's tangible in a way writing to publish isn't. When I finish a story I have to temper my satisfaction and prepare for the

rejection letters; when I finish working with a student there's immediate satisfaction.

The other thing that drew me to tutoring was the challenge. I'm a self-educated writer; I learned by reading and writing on my own. I



always feared my writing was weak because of my lack of formal education. Tutoring was a way for me to test my hard (if unconventionally) won knowledge. To my surprise, I

found that my experience and knowledge of writing were not only respectable, but that my

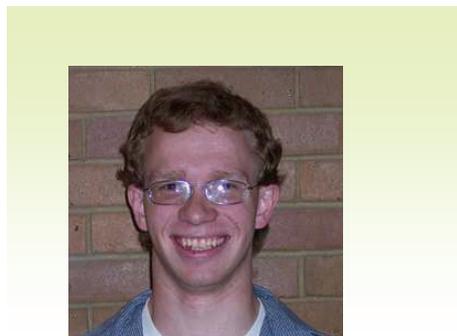
"uneducated" perspective actually offered certain tutoring advantages. For many students, a challenge in writing is the intimidation of formal writing. They perceive mystical formulas that make good writing and feel they lack the key or legend to make such computations. I learned to write rhetorically; my guiding

principle: "What do I want my reader to understand?" I found that I could discuss writing and English principles, not in terms of what they were, but what they did and why--the same terms in which I understood them. This removed some of the mysticism for many students. So, every tutoring session is a joint revelation: students learn that they can write after all and, in a way, so do I. ●

Meet David Greenwood of Focused Tutoring *How has tutoring improved your life academically or professionally?*

It has allowed me to see more avenues for my career choices and given me something to do to advance my own personal knowledge. It allows me to go over previous materials with someone else to help me see them in a new light. Academically, I have been able to do better in my cur-

rent classes because tutoring has been a way for me to grow in the academic world because I am learning from a different perspective that I love and will keep a part of me. For my professional life, it has helped me reinforce what I intend to do with my life.



Submit something to *What Works for Me*

What Works for Me in February will address the issues of professionalism as a tutor.

Suggested topics:

What aspects of being a tutor do you feel are contributions to your future career? Are there any of you that see yourself staying in the tutoring profession for the long term? I would like to hear about any

professional tutoring organizations you belong to. Have you ever attended a tutoring conference? What did you hear about or learn? What did you present? What conferences are coming up this year?

To submit something to WWFM, you can bring it to a Learning Center or Student Writing Center or submit it via email to-

Christie.hall@slcc.edu.

Drop off Locations:

Redwood Campus LC TB 213

Student Writing Ctr. AD 218

South City Campus LC N308

Sandy Campus LC B 105

Jordan Campus LC 102 HTC

Salt Lake Community College



Disclaimer

This publication is intended for tutors to share ideas. While submissions may be edited, all information contained within is to be considered tutor-to-tutor communication and it not the official position of the Learning Center staff or of Salt Lake Community College. If there is a concern about the contents of this newsletter, please contact the Learning Center Director, Gary Campbell, or Christie Hall, editor of this publication.

Thanks for reading!

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Find this month's edition and prior editions of *What Works For Me* online in our archive:

<http://www.slcc.edu/learning-center/services.asp>

Submissions for *What Works for Me* in February are due by February 10th. The theme for February is "professionalism." For details, see page 3 of this issue.

John Steiner, continued from page 2 .

or their major.

Going further, I would ask about life scenarios such as paying bills or other common living tasks to establish a reference for their class work or project. Indirect means of gathering information about a student's abilities came over time. Reading their stress levels, and gearing my language and tone toward calming. Also an option is humor so that a quick laugh releases endorphins to relax the anxious. Other students needed a slightly firmer approach to induce the seriousness

of being motivated to work through course requirements. And there comes a time to pop off the training wheels, when I let the overly dependent student know they have to become self reliant. This last resort arises once I see that a student is disinclined to work without someone brooding over their shoulder or "holding their hand" along the way. Jay Woodall explained to me when I first interviewed for the job that my objective is to put myself out of business. As tutors we should be always mindful of ensuring academic independence in students; empowering them to take the pebble from our hands as it were.

In the end, my purpose is to help students see their inner mastery and use it in class and all other things. ✎



Linda Richard, continued from page 2.

Another thing I learned from interviewing people on campus who work with students is that every individual is unique in their preferred learning style. Here at the DRC, we assess each student's learning style when they come in for Learning Strategies. Even though there may be some commonalities in learning styles and theories, each person is unique and needs to find what works for them. ✎

Introducing... continued from page 1

one-to-one tutoring by appointment for students who need at least an hour of tutoring per week. Students may also meet in small groups. Students are required to sign an agreement to attend tutoring all semester.

Trio/Student Support Services offers tutoring and many kinds of advising, through a federally funded program, for students that meet certain criteria: 1) They are first generation college students 2) low income 3) permanent residents 4) bachelor degree bound 5) has academic need.

The International Center offers academic advising, placement services, cultural experience and activities for international students to intermingle with local students, as well as registration and admissions assistance and processing. This center only serves students who arrive on a student visa and does not serve all students from other countries nor serves all students speaking a language other than English.

For more information about College resources, go to <http://www.slcc.edu/>