**MANAGING TIME OF AN APPOINTMENT MODULE**

One of the most difficult jobs for tutors is learning to manage the time in an appointment. Appointments need to be focused and productive, so it is important to **keep one eye on the clock** and the other on the writing before you move through the following sequence of activities.

**Prepare:**

Look up the name of your client on the scheduler. Using the Report System, check previous client reports on this client and consider how this information can help you approach your session.

1. If your client has been to the Center before, what was the most recent appointment? What was the goal and content of that appointment? Reason: In case the client plans to do further work with that paper, you can (hopefully) plan to work on another stage of the writing process.
2. Scan other previous reports for trends, patterns, and what was addressed in the session. Reason: so you can build on previous tutor work and encourage growth. Most importantly, so you do not contradict your colleagues or confuse clients with new language or strategies that might distract his/her progress.

**Starting the Appointment Right:**

The success of an entire session rests upon how well you structure the first ten minutes of the appointment. There are three important steps with which you should always begin your appointments:

Making the Client Feel Welcome

* Introduce yourself
* Shake the client’s hand
* Ensure the client signed in properly
* If this is the client’s first appointment, describe how the Center works

Becoming Familiar with the Assignment

* Before the session, review past client reports
* Ask questions to orient yourself with the client’s progress in the assignment
* Review assignment sheet
* Request other relevant products regarding this assignment (e.g. class notes, readings, previous drafts)
* Ask for assignment due date

Setting Goals

* Ask if client has previously visited the Writing Center with this assignment, and inquire about the goals and accomplishments of that session
* Ask the client what he/she would like to accomplish
* Always set and write down goals for the session
* Keep assignment due date in mind when setting goals

**Maintaining Focus and Momentum**

A good session keeps both you and the client involved and focused for at least thirty minutes of active writing, reading, and thinking. However, some clients need to be convinced that certain revisions and edits are necessary or worth their energy and time.

Overcoming initial resistance

* Use phrases like, “I see what you’re saying, but…” or “I understand how you might feel about this, but…’
* Admit to the impasse, take a five-minute break to work on something else, and return to the issue with a fresh perspective.

Helping clients fight anxiety or feelings of being overwhelmed

* Break down bigger tasks into smaller ones, and discuss how the work you are doing together will help him/her meet the deadline.
* Point out positive patterns in the client’s writing if you feel his/her frustration derives from a lack of confidence.
* Don’t be afraid to share an experience or example about the difficulties of writing—sometimes clients need to know we face the same frustrations they do.
* Ask the client if a particular strategy has been more helpful to him/her in the past.
* Clarify understanding of vocabulary, the assignment, and class concepts. We can help with the first two, but it’s important to know when clients need to better familiarize themselves with class materials and/or speak to professors about their confusions.

Have the Client Read Aloud From the Paper

* Reading aloud is key to familiarizing yourself with the client’s writing style. Use your judgment to decide what and how much to read. For example, you might want to have the client read aloud their introduction and conclusion for longer papers, but have him or her read through the whole draft if it is under three pages.

Point Out Positive and/or Negative Patterns in the Client’s Writing

* Remember that our goal for each session is to teach instead of fix. It is your job to teach your clients to recognize and fix positive and negative patterns in their work. Patterns are your clients’ frequent and repeated tendencies in their writing.

Teach Techniques/Strategies that the Client Can Use Independently

* Make the most out of the appointment time. Ask yourself if you have taken the opportunity to teach the client something that he/she can use independently to help with future assignments. If possible, have the client practice it in your presence so that you can provide guidance.

**The Importance of Ending Right:**

The goal of the last five minutes is to prepare the client to continue working independently by reviewing what was accomplished.

Spend the last five minutes reviewing the work you completed during the appointment

* Reviewing your work 1) allows both you and the client to double check understanding and clarity and 2) celebrate the progress you two have made.

Establish a “Game Plan” for the Client to Continue Working on the Paper Independently

* Before the session ends, be sure to check on client understanding of his/her next steps to improving the paper. Have the client verbalize and write the next steps as well as write a reflection on the writing skill or concept focused on during the session. This is your opportunity to get feedback on what the client is taking away from the work you did together.

If necessary, encourage clients to return to the Center

* Sometimes a client needs more help than we can provide in a single session. If you feel this is the case, encourage the client to make another appointment at the Center. If they agree, you should end the session by making a list of tasks they wish to work on when they return.

Guide the Client to a Computer to Complete the Client Feedback Survey Before He/She Leaves

* Ask a Front Desk Worker to or show the client how to pull up a client feedback form and give him/her privacy while he/she fills it out.

**Module Comprehension Check:**

1. It is 10:00am. You have 45-50 minutes to help a client as much as possible. Fill in the ideal time breakdown for the session:

* Welcome client: 10:00am
* Familiarize yourself with the assignment
* Set a session goal
* Client begins actively thinking, writing, and/or reading
* Begin end product
* Begin ending the session
* End session: 10:48am

1. What takes priority: meeting the client’s original goal within 45 minutes or answering questions and addressing issues as they arise? Explain.