**REPORT MODULE**

The purpose of this module is to orient you with 1) the purpose of a client report, 2) the language tutors use to describe the work done in Writing Center sessions, and 3) the six-sentence template of an effective client report.

What Is a Client Report and What Is Its Purpose?

Client reports document each session. They have two audiences: Writing Center staff and professors. We expect that you write reports factually, clearly, without judgment, and without careless mistakes. We also expect sufficient description to aid both professors and fellow tutors in working with the client in subsequent sessions. These reports demonstrate your professionalism and thus the professionalism and effectiveness of the Center.

The Seven-Sentence Template for a Complete and Effective Client Report

1st sentence: What the client brought to the appointment.  
2nd sentence: What types of appointments/strategies the client worked on in most recent Writing Center sessions—or—if the client is new to the Center.

3rd sentence:  The client’s understanding of the goals for the session.  
4th sentence:  Focus of the session.  
5th sentence:  Key details about the session—insights, key strategies or interactions, learning outcomes, sentence-level issues discussed.  
6th sentence:  The last line of the report should state specific accomplishments and reference written reflections: *"The client left the session with an annotated assignment sheet, an edited annotated bibliography entry, another partially drafted annotated bibliography entry, an online resource about MLA citations, and reflections on how to organize bibliographic information.”* Or: *“The client left with an editing checklist and two edited paragraphs as well as reflections on how to identify run-on sentences.”*

(\*7th sentence: If you have a standing appointment, end the report with a plan for next week: *“Next week, [name of client] will bring a partial draft of POL paper 2 so that we can check for clear transitions.”*)

If everyone follows the template, all tutors and professors can more easily and quickly understand the work accomplished in a session. So, remember these major guidelines:

* *Be clear about what the client brought to the session.* If the client has his/her assignment sheet, past drafts, professor comments, etc., all are important. Having or not having these materials informs the reader not only how prepared the student was but also what limitations you may have faced in the session (ex: not having an assignment sheet or draft would limit your options for the session).
* *Be sure to be accurate.* Do not accidentally mislead the reader to believe more was covered in the session than actually occurred.
* *Be sure not to judge.* It is up to the professor to judge whether or not the draft is in "good shape," "addresses the prompt," is "properly developed," etc. It is appropriate to signal to the professor if the client was resistant to suggestions or feedback, unusually confused by the assignment, or unusually unresponsive. It is not appropriate to judge the client as "unmotivated" or "uncooperative."
* *Do not give a "play-by-play" of the entire session.* Focus the report on major issues addressed and major outcomes.

As you begin writing reports, refer to the Writing Center Style Guide often. The Style Guide is attached to this module and between tutor work stations in the Center.

**Module Comprehension Check:**

1. How does avoiding judgmental language help you as a tutor?
2. How might writing reports help you develop your tutoring skills?
3. Which sentences of the report might a professor pay particular attention to and why?
4. Which item from the Writing Center Style Guide below do you find especially helpful and why?

**Lake Forest College Writing Center Style Guide**

Follow these guidelines when writing reports and work-related emails.

*Mechanics*

1. Write out numbers that are under one hundred (see the Hacker manual p. 83).
2. Avoid contractions (e.g. “didn’t” or “haven’t”).
3. Use quotation marks around terms from client materials, statements clients say, or key words used in strategies (e.g. “Sam drafted sentences beginning with ‘if,’ ‘unless,’ and ‘perhaps’ to develop implications for her argument.”; see the Hacker manual p. 71).
4. Avoid abbreviations (e.g. “intro” for “introduction”); however, shorten long handout titles (i.e. “Ten Moves” for “Ten Moves to Find Meaningful Tension”).
5. Capitalize handouts (e.g. “Ten Moves”).
6. Capitalize “Tutor Binder” and “Writing Center.”

*Word Choice*

1. Use “[aloud](http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/aloud-or-out-loud)” instead of “out loud.”
2. Use “course” instead of “class” (e.g., “for her philosophy course”).
3. Use “assignment sheet” instead of “prompt.”
4. Use “the Hacker manual” instead of “A Pocket Style Manual.”
5. Use “consulted,” “reviewed,” or “referred to” instead of “utilized the Hacker manual.”
6. Explain vague pronouns. For example, instead of “This/It helped Sam reorder the paragraphs,” write “This revision strategy helped Sam reorder the paragraphs.”
7. Avoid conversational expressions, including imprecise phrasal verbs (e.g. “added in,” “wrote down,” and “talked about”).
8. Clarify adverb clauses beginning with “how.” For example, instead of “We discussed how word choice affects clarity,” write “We discussed ways to improve clarity through word choice” or “We discussed the relationship between word choice and argument clarity.”
9. Avoid broad verbs, including “make,” “get,” and “do.”
10. Use simple past tense unless you are reporting work the client did before your last session (e.g., “Last week, we created an outline” not “Last week, we had created an outline”; see the Hacker manual pp. 48-49).
11. Avoid unnecessary setting, such as “to the Center” or “to her appointment.”
12. Describe end products or client work with words like “rough,” “skeletal,” or “general” instead of “simplistic” or “basic.”

*Report Specifics*

1. Begin reports with a clear description of what the client brought: “Sam brought an annotated reading, a drafted introduction, and a skeletal outline” or “Sam brought a two-page draft and the assignment sheet.”
2. Frame actions as client-based or partner-based, not tutor-based. For example, instead of “I had Sam underline main ideas,” write “Sam underlined main ideas” or “We underlined main ideas.”
3. Tutor-based actions should be instructional. For example, “I demonstrated, illustrated, explained, guided, or encouraged,” not “I had, told, or directed.”
4. If you refer to a handout, explain how the handout was used: Did the client review, consult, read, annotate, or study the handout? Were handout examples used as a model?
5. If the client produces work, explain the specific method, technique, or strategy the client practiced: “Sam asked herself if each paragraph described a cause or an effect” or “By highlighting her own key words, Sam discovered the main ideas in her paper.”
6. If the client leaves with revisions, briefly describe how much was revised: “Sam left with several revised topic sentences” or “Sam revised one paragraph to use as a model when revising the others on her own.”
7. If the client has a standing appointment, include quantifiable goals for the next session: “Sam will bring a partial draft with at least two paragraphs” or “Sam will bring at least one academic source and a summary paragraph.”
8. Acknowledge a client’s confusion with specific, diplomatic language, such as: “Sam was uncertain about…”; “Sam wanted to clarify…”; “Although Sam was comfortable with X, she still had some confusion/felt unsure about Y”; or "Sam wanted to review how to....” (*Avoid judgmental language, such as:* “Sam had issues/problems with…”; “Sam failed to…”; “Sam struggled to…”; and “Sam could not understand how to….”).