

*A Writing Center Consultation*

Tutor, Michael:

Hi. Thanks for coming. I'm Michael.

Student, Melanie:

I'm Melanie.

Michael:

May I have your I.D.?

Melanie:

Yes.

Michael:

Thank you. After the consultation, I'm going to write down some information about what we've talked about today, and I'm going to send it off to your teacher in an email, so she knows that you've been working hard. So what do you need help with today?

Melanie:

I need help with a paper from my English class.

Michael:

Have you been to the writing center before?

Melanie:

No.

Michael:

Alright, well let me tell you what we do. When you come to the writing center, it's a great idea to bring a clean double-spaced copy of your work. It's really helpful if you bring in an assignment so us instructors can really see what the teacher wants. If you have other materials like resources or a research paper, it's really helpful if you bring those too, so we can kind of put them all together. Any questions?

Melanie:

So I can bring in a paper from my Psychology class, right? It doesn't just have to be for English?

Michael:

Oh, absolutely. The writing center is open to all classes college wide. Alright, so let's get started then. What can I help you with today?

Melanie:

I need help with my writing.

Michael:

You'll have to be more specific than that. When you write and your teacher makes marks on your paper, what kind of mistakes does the teacher say you make?

Melanie:

Well, the last paper I turned in to my teacher, she said that my thesis statement was weak and that I was having problems using commas.

Michael:

Okay, so we can start by looking at the introduction of your paper and check out the thesis and then we'll look at the body paragraphs to see if they support the thesis that you wrote, and while we're looking at all those sentences, we can check to see if the commas are right. If anything else comes up during the paper, we can stop to talk about that. Alright, let me see what you got.

Melanie:

[Reads paper]

What led me to college. I did not always know if I would go to college. When I was young, I did not think it was really important because no one in my family went to school past high school. I thought I would get a job when I turned sixteen and work that job for my life. One day in math class, when I was a sophomore in high school, the teacher explained to the class how important it is to get a college degree. She told us how much more money a person can make if they go to college. I was led to college to make more money and for other reasons.

Michael:

Okay, so, where's your thesis? Read it to me.

Melanie:

I was led to college to make more money and for other reasons.

Michael:

What are the other reasons? Do you have them somewhere?

Melanie:

I name them later.

Michael:

Okay, show me one.

Melanie:

There's one here. I will meet new people.

Michael:

Okay, good. So, write right next to your thesis there, "meet new people." Do you have another reason?

Melanie:

I will continue to learn so that I can understand the world.

Michael:

Alright, good. Write "continue to learn" next to your thesis, too. Now, this is why your teacher probably said your thesis was weak before. You wrote a sentence. You had one good idea, make more money, but then you said other reasons and that makes the thesis weak. It's not very descriptive; it's not very specific. We want it to be specific; we need to have information so that the reader will know what to expect. Do you think you can combine what you've written with those two other ideas to make a new thesis?

Melanie:

Yes. I was led to college to make more money, to meet new people, and to continue to learn so that I can understand the world.

Michael:

Good. Now you have some specific ideas that you are going to talk about. Now the reader can look at that and see what to expect.

Melanie:

I decided to go to college so I could make more money, meet new friends, and continue learning.

Michael:

Good. That last sentence reminds the reader of your main points, and it gives the essay a sense of completion. Any more questions?

Melanie:

In my next paper, I'm going to have to use sources and quote it. Could you help me with that?

Michael:

We can do that. We do that all the time. Anything else?

Melanie:

Also, I'm going to have to do a works cited page. I know I'm going to have problems with that. Could you help there as well?

Michael:

Certainly. We do a lot of work with MLA or APA format. So, you just bring any resources you want to or at least what you've got down for your works cited page. We can help you go through that and make sure it looks exactly the way the teacher wants it to. Any more questions?

Melanie:

Nope. That's it.

Michael:

Well, thank you, Melanie. Good luck with your paper and please come back and see us again.

Melanie:

Will do.

Michael:

Alright, bye.

Melanie:

Bye