ENG 497 Writing and Publishing Internship

Keene State College Center for Writing Intern

Arline Votruba

**Description:** Interning at the Center for Writing offers people interested in teaching an opportunity to practice and learn from a tutoring site on campus. Many engaging staff and apprenticeship meetings helped me develop my understanding of the purpose of a writing center as well as the specific ways our Center could improve its practices. This internship is great for students who like a variety of individual and group tasks. Interning at the Center requires participant interest in helping other students to enhance their writing. Center interns must demonstrate a willingness to learn and improve their own writing in the process of teaching others. This internship is engaging because tasks vary over the course of the semester.

This semester I worked at the Center for Writing as an intern. This job site provided me with many opportunities to improve my writing, editing and tutoring abilities. It also offered me a space to collaborate with other students while working on documents, enhancing my efficiency at completing group work. During my hours I attended many group meetings and worked individually on tasks.

My tasks varied throughout the semester, however, I did work on a long term project throughout my time as an intern. I focused on gathering many important Center policies and best practices in order to create a handbook that can be used to train future tutors. I created a survey for current tutors and apprentices in order to gather key information to include in the handbook. Whenever I had shifts without any particular tasks, I would continue developing the handbook.

During my internship I was also responsible for attending and participating in all aspects of the apprenticeship training program. I completed a check list of mandatory tasks that prepared me as a tutor such as observing workshops and tutoring sessions. Eventually I was offered the opportunity to hold my own tutoring sessions.

This semester Keene State College was the host of NEWCA. I spent many hours as the Center intern preparing for NEWCA. I helped to create the program, organize materials for conference registration, and spent the weekend of NEWCA at the conference. This was my first academic conference and so helping out with all of the preparation gave me an inside look at what conferences are all about.

I also incorporated my experience with photography into this internship by helping the Center to get some professional looking photos of the building, inside and out, for use in the NEWCA program, future advertising, and the handbook.

During many of my shifts, Kate or other members of the Center asked for my assistance in editing and reviewing written documents. Sometimes I was just editing e-mails, other times I was helping to write documents in collaboration with other members of the Center.

I attended the staff meetings throughout the semester. During these meetings, all tutors and apprentices gathered to discuss Center business. These meetings were important in my development of the handbook, as it was a time and place for tutors to bring up concerns and questions regarding their work at the Center.

**Reflective letter**

During my internship, I was primarily concerned with the long term project of creating a handbook. I focused on finding the aspects of the Center that were confusing to me and clarifying the best practices and policies as described by Kate, Cyndi, or current tutors. I worked hard to create a readable, engaging, and clear set of instructions for working in the Center. I also spent time taking photos to incorporate into the handbook so that readers would feel more engaged with the material.

Aside from the handbook, I would come into the Center and ask Kate or Cyndi what tasks they had for me. Many times they would have a memo that needed editing or a tutor session they needed covered. I was always willing to participate in whatever work they requested, and focused on whatever I could learn from my experience here as an intern.

The Center hosted NEWCA, and I helped a lot with the many preparations for the conference. I started creating the program for NEWCA and also helped complete it by collaborating with Cyndi on a cover. During the actual conference I helped set up, worked the registration table, and participated by attending several of the sessions.

As I wrap up the handbook, it is amazing to reflect on my progress as a writer and tutor throughout the semester. Entering the internship, I had no expectations. I was open-minded and ready to try something completely new. After hours of meetings, tutor sessions, observations and individual work, I am impressed by the things I was able to accomplish over the semester. I learned a lot about the structure and purpose of writing centers during this internship. I engaged in many interesting discussions about what we do here at the Center and expanded my understanding of the Center as a campus resource. Essentially, the internship showed me that I should have visited the Center sooner.

As I said, I did not start the internship with many expectations. I knew Kate from a class I took with her in the fall and knew that working with her would help push me closer to my career goals of becoming a teacher. Over the course of the semester, I was surprised to see what great efforts all of the people who work here at the Center take in order to move the Center forward. Whether through outreach programs, advertising or even particular adjustments to tutor approaches, the Center is very self-aware and consistently striving to provide better services to the students who utilize this campus resource.

I was surprised with how much work I was able to accomplish throughout my time as the Center’s intern. It was remarkable to be able to participate in such a range of Center related tasks. One of the major positives of this internship was the opportunity to work on different things throughout my shifts, rather than sticking to one project. It opened my eyes to the many ongoing projects at the Center and informed me about the ways that campus writing centers develop their services over time.

I was excited when Kate and Cyndi offered me the opportunity to hold my own tutoring sessions. When I started the internship, I was unsure whether I would be able to tutor on my own because of the way that tutors are generally trained. After a couple months working in the Center, I was offered a chance to tutor. I thought that my sessions went extremely well and I am glad I was able to have the opportunity as it reinforced my intent to teach.

There were no aspects of the internship that fell short of my expectations. I went into this very open-minded, hoping to soak in all that I could without putting too much pressure on particular outcomes because I had no prior experience tutoring or working in a writing center. I was surprised by what a comfortable and tight knit community the tutors and apprentices are. It impressed me how well the many members of the Center work together, especially granted the various academic backgrounds of the students working here.

I felt completely adequate at my job. Strong writing and editing skills are necessary in this field, but with many years of college English under my belt, I did not struggle. My knowledge of working with other people came in handy, despite the difference of venue. What I mean is that my skills in customer service transferred well into engaging in tutoring sessions with tutees. There were no aspects of the internship that felt out of reach. I successfully completed all of my assigned tasks.

During the internship, I was always forward with my opinions and ideas. I think that I contributed a lot of thought provoking ideas during our staff meetings and offered good insight about the Center based on my own observations. I was able to point out particular feedback to Kate, Cyndi, the apprentices and the tutors whenever something struck me as important or in need of an adjustment.

I think that my work in writing workshops over my years as an English major were very crucial in preparing for this internship. I was eager to begin tutoring because of the extensive experience I have with engaging with students about their writing and offering feedback. Practicing peer reviewing and group workshopping in class prepared me for individual tutor sessions.

The success of my tutoring sessions truly reinforced my intentions of becoming a college professor. Engaging with students one on one is an intimidating thought until put to action. I felt that I was successful in establishing a professional repertoire with students while still offering relatable examples and explanations. I think this experience made me realize the benefits of working at a campus writing center and has opened my mind about the many avenues that my degree can take me.

The Center for Writing was an excellent site for interning. I was offered direction from supervisors who trusted me and let me complete work on my own. I thought that it was great that my supervisors allowed me to complete tasks on my own so that I could practice work ethic and time management rather than having someone chase me down for deadlines.

This internship was really beneficial and I think the site would be great for other students interested in exploring the world of teaching and writing. I do not have suggestions for enhancing the work that interns do here. The internship allowed me opportunities to engage in various academic events and I found that to be really great. I think that the handbook I have written is good but that future interns should add to and revise the handbook as things arise in the Center regarding policies.

I have included the Center handbook in my writing portfolio. Although I helped with the NEWCA program, the handbook is what I personally wrote during the semester as the Center’s intern.

**Time Sheet for Keene State College’s**

**ENG 497: Writing and Publishing Internship**

Name: Arline Votruba

Fill in the time sheet for each day that you work at/for the internship. Please keep a running total of the number of hours worked for your internship.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Start | End | Total Time Spent  (within ½ hour) | Brief Summary of Task(s) | Total Time worked to date (hours) |
| 1-22 | 11:30am | 1pm | 1.5 | Introduction into the Center | 1.5 |
| 1-25 | 12pm | 4pm | 4 | Begin tasks such as proofreading and organizing ideas for future projects | 5.5 |
| 1-29 | 10:30am | 3:30pm | 5 | Attend apprenticeship training meeting along with student involvement fair | 10.5 |
| 2-1 | 12pm | 4pm | 4 | Begin outline of handbook, talk to current tutors for info about the Center | 14.5 |
| 2-2 | 7pm | 9pm | 2 | Work on edits of handouts for students & tutors | 16.5 |
| 2-8 | 12pm | 4pm | 4 | Work on handbook/proof reading other documents | 20.5 |
| 2-9 | 5pm | 7pm | 2 | Readings for internship | 22.5 |
| 2-12 | 11am | 3:30pm | 4.5 | Attend apprenticeship meetings/have own tutor session | 27 |
| 2-15 | 12pm | 4pm | 4 | Created a questionnaire to gather info from tutors and apprentices to include in handbook/worked on handbook | 31 |
| 2-17 | 12:30 pm | 4:30 pm | 4 | Ask Cyndi and tutors specific questions to inform my work on the handbook | 35 |
| 2-19 | 12pm | 1pm | 1 | Apprenticeship meeting | 36 |
| 2-22 | 12pm | 4pm | 4 | Work on handbook, observed tutoring session, rewrote wipe board outside of the Center | 40 |
| 2-24 | 12pm | 4pm | 4 | Observed workshop Opinion vs. Argument with tutors, worked on NEWCA program | 44 |
| 2-25 | 9am | 10am | 1 | Observed custom workshop | 45 |
| 2-26 | 12pm | 3:30pm | 3.5 | Attend apprenticeship meeting followed by full staff meeting | 48.5 |
| 2-29 | 12pm | 3:30 pm | 3.5 | Worked on NEWCA program | 52 |
| 2-29 | 5pm | 6pm | 1 | First ever tutor session! | 53 |
| 3-2 | 12pm | 2:30pm | 2.5 | Worked on NEWCA program | 55.5 |
| 3-4 | 10am | 1:30 pm | 3.5 | Held tutoring session, attended apprenticeship training | 59 |
| 3-9 | 6pm | 8pm | 2 | Readings for internship | 61 |
| 3-11 | 10am | 2pm | 4 | Worked on handbook, helped out in center with closing for spring break! | 65 |
| 3-21 | 12pm | 4pm | 4 | Worked on cover for NEWCA program | 69 |
| 3-23 | 12:30 pm | 2:30 pm | 2 | Finished creating NEWCA program cover | 71 |
| 3-25 | 1:30pm | 3:30pm | 2 | Staff meeting | 73 |
| 3-28 | 12:30pm | 4:30pm | 4 | NEWCA prep, creating posters and editing program | 77 |
| 3-30 | 2pm | 4pm | 2 | NEWCA prep | 79 |
| 4-1 | 10am | 1pm | 3 | Covered a tutoring shift | 82 |
| 4-1 | 2pm | 3pm | 1 | Last minute NEWCA prep | 83 |
| 4-2 | 6:45 am | 1pm | 6 | NEWCA conference set up and sessions | 89 |
| 4-2 | 2:45pm | 4pm | 1 | NEWCA session 3 | 90 |
| 4-3 | 7:30 am | 12:45pm | 5 | NEWCA set up and sessions | 95 |
| 4-4 | 4pm | 5pm | 1 | Writing tutor blog | 96 |
| 4-6 | 12:30pm | 2:30 | 2 | Completed tutor blog | 98 |
| 4-11 | 12:15pm | 3:15pm | 3 | Work on handbook, proofread some e-mails | 101 |
| 4-13 | 12pm | 4pm | 4 | Worked on handbook | 105 |
| 4-15 | 10:30am | 1pm | 2.5 | Worked on handbook/final apprentice meeting | 107.5 |
| 4-15 | 2pm | 3:30pm | 1.5 | Peer Led Learning Event | 109 |
| 4-18 | 12:30pm | 4:30 pm | 4 | Worked on handbook | 113 |
| 4-20 | 12pm | 3:30pm | 3.5 | Covered Analee’s shift, took photos for handbook, edited and worked on handbook | 116.5 |
| 4-22 | 12pm | 1pm | 1 | Worked on handbook | 117.5 |
| 4-25 | 12pm | 4pm | 4 | Added photos to handbook, revised all writing | 121.5 |
| 4-27 | 4pm | 6pm | 2 | Worked on handbook | 122.5 |
| 4-30 | 1pm | 7pm | 6 | Met with Liesl and worked on editing the handbook | 128.5 |
| 5-2 | 10am | 2pm | 4 | Held last tutoring session, worked on portfolio | 132.5 |
| Class meetings: | 2pm | 3:45 | 1.75X7=12.25 | Internship class meetings | 144.75 |