

## **How are tutors measuring their successes and failures? What do they use as *benchmarks*, and what do they look for as *evidence*?**

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### ***Benchmarks based on the writer:***

- ★ Some combination of meeting the writer's goals and renegotiating them:
  - Just ignoring or quashing the writer's goals feels like failure
  - Merely complying with the writer's goals, when not aligned with OWRC priorities, also feels like failure
- ★ Indirect assessment of tutoring, based on writer's self-assessment:
  - E.g. if the writer can answer the question: "Do you know what your next steps are?"
- ★ The interpersonal dynamics of the conversation:
  - Lots of back and forth, lots of writer engagement; quiet sessions feel less successful
- ★ The writer's body language:
  - Does the writer look uncomfortable? Do they physically distance themselves? Are they facing away, or have they made themselves small? Do they lack expression?
  - At the end of the session, do they seem confident and more relaxed? Do they seem to be in a hurry to leave?
- ★ The writer gets a chance to learn something/do something new:
  - The writer makes changes, proposes new ideas, comes up with solutions on the spot
  - You manage to strike a good balance in the conversation between discussing specifics in the paper, and discussing general and transferable writing concerns
- ★ The writer returns to work with you:
  - Especially if they return with a new project, or having made revisions on the early draft of the same project
  - The writer returns wanting to work on new things (i.e., having developed a richer vocabulary for talking about and assessing their own writing)
- ★ Whether a relationship/trust has been built:
  - The writer brings me food!
  - The conversation extends beyond the writing session (e.g. personal life, longer-term goals)
  - The writer discloses past unpleasant experiences they've had in the OWRC
  - The writer feels comfortable talking about their own ideas (whether or not they think the ideas are good!)

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### ***Benchmarks based on organizational culture:***

- ★ Desire to represent the OWRC well; want the writer to have a useful experience and come back
- ★ React to culture of caring/investment in the work; feel pressure to match commitments of co-workers

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***Benchmarks based on self:***

- ★ Own emotions during and after the session:
  - Feeling like you're interrogating someone is not a mark of success
  - Feeling like you've become the bad guy by disrupting where the writer is at with their paper (e.g., they thought they were basically done)
  - Lots of stress during the session feels like failure
  - Amount of effort it takes to negotiate focus of session; whether negotiation of goals occurs and is successful
  - Aware that own emotional cues may be magnified by "ridiculous self-consciousness", filtered through a tendency to take even compliments as criticism
- ★ Own success at managing the logistics of the session:
  - Good use of time (leaving time for a closing discussion, making good progress through a large project without feeling rushed, etc.)
  - Set reasonable goals within the first 15 minutes of a session; achieve those goals within the allocated time
- ★ Establish goals for self at the beginning of the session, both interpersonal (e.g., I want to get this person to open up) and writing-related
- ★ Putting yourself in the writer's position, asking what's been useful for you in the past as a writer (thinking of your favorite tutors, teachers, etc.)
- ★ Staying alert to your verbal habits:
  - Do you repeat certain words? Do you have favorite soundbyte answers?
- ★ Some benchmarks come from comparing/contrasting tutoring with other kinds of work you do

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***Benchmarking based on co-workers:***

- ★ Observe other tutors:
  - Can be inspiring, getting good examples of things to do and impressions of what success looks like
  - Can be intimidating, raising fears of inadequacy
- ★ Admire qualities in one specific tutor and try to learn from them ("The Kirin Effect")
- ★ Uncertain whether other tutors are eavesdropping on you and judging you; try to impress them