Office of Academic Writing and Publishing Support
The Writing Support Circles: Purpose, Description, and Ground Rules

Purpose:

The Writing Support Circle (WSC) is intended to create a community of learners who work together on improving their academic writing with guidance of a facilitator.

Description:

Each WSC consists of 3-5 peers who meet bi-weekly for 1.5 hour sessions. Each session starts with a short mini-lesson by the facilitator and continues with activities designed to help peers learn from each other and with each other. Mini lesson topics come from course assignments, course instructors, and WSC participants. WSC Mini lessons and activities are centered on issues that present obstacles for students when writing. Examples of such issues include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Choosing a topic for a course paper
- Narrowing down a topic to a purpose statement
- Writing a clear and succinct purpose statement
- Organizing a course paper
- Finding a meaningful title for a paper
- Working with other students on a course paper
- Developing the ability to read critically and provide feedback to peers
- Learning to use peer feedback to re-draft a paper
- Following the guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.).
- Developing a well-organized paragraph
- Using literature to support an argument
- Improving technical writing skills

Group Membership:

Groups are formed when 3-5 participants who are enrolled in the same course with the same instructor decide to work together in a WSC for an entire term. A faculty member can recommend that students form a WSC, students can form a group, or the OAWPS will invite participants to join a WSC. The participants can work on any writing project assigned by the instructor and described in the syllabus.

Process to start a Writing Support Circle:

- Contact via email either Dr. Tonette S. Rocco (roccot@fiu.edu) or Dr. Maria S. Plakhotnik (mplakhot@fiu.edu)

Dr. Tonette S. Rocco, Director, and Dr. Maria S. Plakhotnik, Assistant Director
Office of Academic Writing and Publishing Support
ZEB 337A, College of Education
Florida International University
Miami, FL 33199
• When inquiring about a WSC
  (1) In the subject line put “Writing Support Circle”
  (2) In the body of the e-mail indicate your specific writing needs and names and
      email addresses of group members
• Preparing for the first WSC meeting
  (1) Create a written list of your questions or concerns
  (2) Bring one hard copy of the paper and an electronic copy of the paper
  (3) Or bring your ideas for a paper
  (4) Bring the course syllabus and any additional instructions from the instructor.
  (5) Take the on-line survey

Ground Rules:

Each participant shows his/her commitment to the WSC by agreeing to the following Ground
Rules:

1. Attend all meetings of the WSC
2. Stay with one WSC and do not come to meetings of other WSCs
3. Come to the meetings on time and stay till the end of the session
4. Complete all tasks assigned to do at home by the agreed deadline
5. Read his/her peers’ work and provide feedback by the agreed deadline
6. Respond to his/her peers’ and facilitator’s emails in a timely manner
7. Participate in the WSC evaluation process/provide feedback to the WSC facilitator

Please return to this form signed and dated to the WSC facilitator at the beginning of the first
session.

I understand the purpose of the WSC and agree to the ground rules.

Signed__________________________________________

Printed Name_____________________________________

Date_____________________________________________