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#### First Semester at a Glance:

The **Writing Center** averaged **270 visits** a month in the first semester compared to 61 visits per month the first year of operation and 146 visits on average per month last year.

The **Research Center**, in its first year with tutors, is providing the most support to our 10th graders who are each completing individual IB Personal Projects this year, with **554 tutoring sessions** either in person or online in Google Classroom.

The 9th Grade class has used the **Reed Math and Science Center** the most so far this school year. Out of **272 freshman tutoring sessions** during the first semester, 176 have been at lunch compared to 142 total 9th grade lunch sessions last year.

The **Joseph Meyerhoff Library** is a hub for individualized support for juniors and seniors as they work through their IB Extended Essay. **133 juniors** and **114 seniors** are working through individual research projects.

#### Contributors:

Sarah Jeanblanc, *Director*

Jennifer Gaither, *Librarian*

Alisa Engsberg,  
*Reed Math and Science Center Coordinator*

Karen Hodges, *Research Center Coordinator*

Lena Tashjian,  
*Writing Center Coordinator*

# CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

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## Student Leadership Through Service Writing Center Tutors Abbottston Elementary Students

Leslie McFadden 2019 and Brandon McKoy 2018

As a tutor in the Center for Teaching and Learning, we are required to be leaders inside and outside of the Writing Center. We show our leadership with our core and our community. Our core consists of our tutor family. We are responsible for supporting each other and building courage and knowledge. We must communicate openly in order to learn how to be professionals. Our community consists of our peer clients and teachers at City College. We have a responsibility to assist and help them. This year, we have extended our community beyond our City campus to include the students of nearby Abbottston Elementary School where we tutor once a month. We believe that if our core is able to support our community then the crowd, those outside of City College, will notice us and seek our help as well. This is how we build a Writing Center family.

We began tutoring elementary students because they needed some assistance with their writing. At first it seemed strange tutoring younger kids, but it was a good experience for both of us. During one session, we helped the 3rd graders with a four paragraph narrative about losing their first tooth. Although the children were focused, we learned to be patient, since they did not work as fast as a high schooler and they needed help finding their mistakes. We worked with them sentence by sentence instead of paragraph by paragraph to help them revise. We also had to talk to them using kid friendly language about writing and help them with their spelling.

We look forward to more sessions with our elementary neighbors. It felt good to help them, but it also showed us how our skills translate to new situations. Tutoring others is a practical skill that we can use to serve our community and distinguish ourselves as leaders.





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## Reed Center Tutors as Teaching Assistants

Angel Dupree 2019

A new innovation in the Reed Math and Science Center this school year is that we have expanded our student support services to become teaching assistants in math classes. This has required us to partner with math teachers to determine who to help and when to help them.

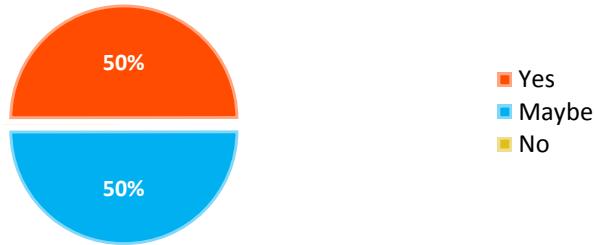
As a Teacher's Assistant, I observe in my selected teacher's classroom to learn about the course material and identify the common mistakes that students are making. I take notes as extra support material and then upload it to Google Classroom so that all students can access it. I work with individual students in the classroom as the teacher identifies them. The teacher will also identify a group of students that need extra support and will work with me as a study group in the Reed Center. In one study group for example, I helped them prepare for an upcoming test by presenting the material in an engaging way that would increase their understanding and help clarify any misunderstandings. Many students in the study group said that in their regular classroom it is sometimes harder to retain new information, so having a smaller work environment like a study group in the Reed Center is beneficial.

To further understand what the students are experiencing, I conducted a survey of the six students in my study group to evaluate if my instruction was effective. Here are my results:

50% of students say that study groups increased their grades while others say it may have but they are not sure of their grades yet.

### Has going to the center for study groups increased your grades?

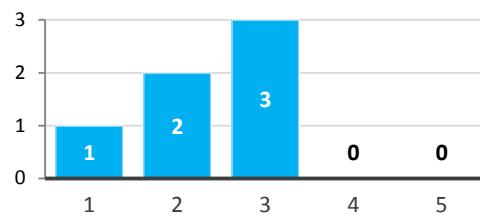
6 responses



100% say that working with a study group in the Reed Center is more effective than working with a peer tutor in their classroom. A different class with a smaller environment may have better results. These results are shown in these two graphs below.

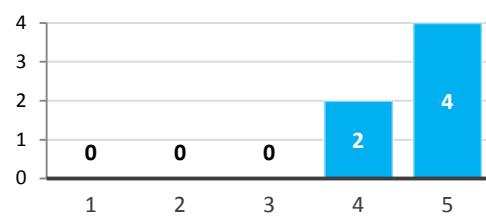
### Rate TA in class

6 responses



### Rate study group

6 responses





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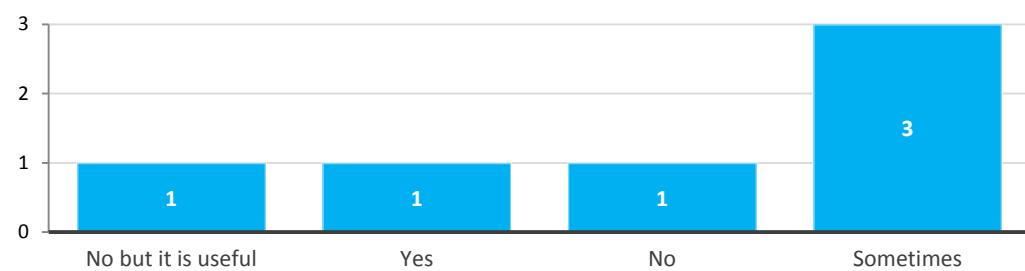
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## Reed Center Tutors as Teaching Assistants

Finally, 1\6 people said that they did not need support from the Reed Center to pass because they understand their work , 3/6 people said "sometimes" they feel like they need the math center to pass this class and 2/6 people said "Yes" they feel like they need the Reed Center to pass this class.

### Do you feel you need to visit the center to pass your math class?

6 responses



Overall, the study groups model has gotten outstanding feedback from students. The method has increased grades while letting students learn at a slower pace. I think that having trained Teaching Assistants to lead a small group is a great study tool and should be practiced elsewhere too. We would like to have TA's in more classes so that we will see more improvements over time by detecting and correcting any issues the students have with their school work.





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## Research Center Tutors: Helping Students in Need

Leslie McFadden 2019 and Brandon McKoy 2018

I think the best part about being a Research Center tutor is having the feeling of being a teacher. Even though I never thought about being a teacher, the feeling of giving back simple knowledge to someone who hasn't, is a wonderful feeling. I love going to different classes and hearing the teacher say, "Ok, listen up... everyone should have a laptop by now. The Research Center tutors are here to help with any questions for about 30 mins." Then we take the lead. To start helping the 10th graders, I normally go to the front of the classroom and ask if anyone needs help. Either that or someone asks me to come over to help them. I also pay attention to the students who are quiet and not asking for any help and even the students that say, "no I don't need any help." The students who say they don't need any help are usually the ones that need the most help.

One challenge in a classroom tutoring session is that sometimes the students are too nervous to talk about their ideas in front of the person they are sitting next to when I visit them at their desk. I make them feel comfortable by saying things like "this is a good topic, but are you really interested in it?" Some students pick a topic just because it was their first idea. I try to explain to them that there are a lot of steps to research and if you pick a topic that you are not interested in, then you will start to feel stressed out and you will want to quit. Overall, the classroom session is a great experience. Not only is it an opportunity to help peers get better grades, but it is also an opportunity for us to lead in the classroom.





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## One on One Support in Research and Writing in Our Library

City's librarian, Jennifer Gaither, is dedicated to student success on the IB Extended Essay. In addition meeting regularly with small groups and procuring the best research material for students, Ms. Gaither also dedicates time to working one on one with students as they write, revise and edit their work. With a steady supply of hot chocolate, highlighters and endless enthusiasm, Ms. Gaither gives feedback to them as they work. The students learn skills along the way that will help them succeed in college like....

Erica Wright Class of 2019

"I've learned how to make my research more concise, so I narrow down what I'm looking for. And as for the writing process, I've learned that I add in a lot fluff into my writing, so it can sound good, but it distracts from the topic at hand. So to counteract this, I can be more concise by having a focused outline before I write and proofread because I repeat myself a lot."

Travell Gardner Class of 2019

"I have learned that once you find the name of a person that was very influential to a certain event, it is easier to find sources."

Pablo Espejo-Saavedra Class of 2019

"This part improved my research skills because I had to refine the question to find something more specific. I had to rephrase what I typed multiple times but in the end I got better at it and found multiple useful sources. I also found out that for this essay I need at least 3 pieces of evidence per paragraph."

Noresse Pope Class of 2019

"I learned that key words really do matter in the research process and sometimes you have to change the words to get the results you want."





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## Motivating Our Peers Using Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset

Mackai Hill Class of 2018

The growth mindset is believing in "yet." If you believe in "yet" than even if you fail a test or do not at first understand the topic, you have the belief that with time and hard work you will eventually be successful. On the other side of the spectrum is the fixed mindset in which you believe that they you can not do any better than they already have. A student with a fixed mindset will focus more on a wrong answer instead of the right answer, while the growth mindset student looks at their mistakes, attempts to fix them and tries different study methods to improve their grades.

Carol Dweck states that " we can praise wisely" meaning that instead of praising a students after doing something fast and easily, we should tell them "this is good, but there still more you could do." Doing this will create a growth mindset and spark a fire within students to go home, look at their work and think "what else can I add ?" We use this idea to encourage our clients at the Writing Center when we ask them how they can improve. It opens a door to what they thinks is wrong with their work. This makes both the student and tutor open their minds to new ways to improve their work. Students can come into the writing center with a good paper, but they always have things to improve upon. As a tutor, it's our job to pull that knowledge out of the student, even if that means that the students sometimes get frustrated at us for answering their questions with questions.

Dweck says to "confront your deficiencies and correct them." I believe that this is the single most important method to fixing work and fixing midsets. When I have a client who believes that their work is not going to improve or that they are wasting their time in the center, I always say "you won't get this YET." They will look at me in disbelief, but as we work we begin to improve their writing. Soon, their faces and attitude go from depressing and hopeless, to a "I can do it" attitude.

One bad grade can make a student believe that they are dumb or that school is hopeless, or it can be a new beginning. The first time I got an F, I thought about dropping out and getting my GED. It took 2 years for me to change my mind. One reason I wanted to be a tutor was to show others that just because I did badly does not mean that I am going to continue doing badly. Anything can change if you are willing to put in the work for it. I agree with Carol Dweck.

Accepting failure is apart of life, but letting it defeat you or up lift to better next time is up to you.





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## Reed Center Tutors Visit UMBC

Dasia Wade Class of 2018

Through a partnership between the Stanford Reed Scholarships and University of Maryland Baltimore County, the Reed Center Tutors spent the day learning about college life. During our tour, we were able to experience typical college student's daily life on the beautiful campus in Catonsville. Our student tour guides let us preview the library, common area, dormitories, nature sites and more. At first the campus seemed small, but after touring it, we saw how much it has to offer their students. Our tour guide told us that she maintains a 4.9 GPA even as a triple major. From what we saw and heard, UMBC is a place where we can be comfortable and successful, too.

Next, our hosts planned a panel discussion for us with the admissions staff and professors so that we could learn more about life at UMBC and the importance of pursuing advanced degrees, particularly in STEM fields. We learned about studying abroad and how minoring in a foreign language could further careers. We also learned about scholarships for local students, internship opportunities and even job opportunities for UMBC students. In all, the Reed Center Tutors feel that UMBC may be a good fit for us. There are a plethora of supports and resources for their students, it is close by and affordable.





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## Tutor Impact: Becoming a Better Communicator

India Frederick 2018

As far back as I can remember, I've always considered myself to be shy. Because of my shyness, middle school intimidated me and I worried about the social challenges I would face in high school. In ninth and tenth grade, my shyness was a barrier that prevented me from opening up and making new friends.

In my tenth grade year as I sat in my English class, a group of upperclassmen Writing Center tutors did a presentation for our class about becoming a tutor in the next school year. I've always loved writing and helping others, but my shyness and the judgment I thought I would receive from my peers stopped me from raising my hand. When the presenters left the room, I felt so disappointed in myself because I allowed my shyness to stop me from trying something new.

About a month later, the presenters visited my class again. This time they asked me directly to be a tutor. As they said my name, I was filled with excitement, especially when they told me that my English teacher recommended me. I completed an interview and was asked to become a tutor in the upcoming school year. After a month of training and a semester of tutoring over 100 clients, the Writing Center at Baltimore City College has helped me to finally overcome my shyness barrier.

Being a tutor has helped me face my fear of speaking in front of large groups and make new friends. Being a tutor has allowed me to attend a national tutor conference in Virginia.

Being a tutor has allowed me become a peer leader because in my senior year I was selected to be a lead tutor. Being a tutor has allowed me to become accustomed to a daily routine of responsibility as I document all tutor session report forms. Most importantly, all of my experiences as a tutor have diminished my shyness and developed my confidence both in my personal and academic life. I now have a passion for stimulating conversation and new experiences. Looking back on how I allowed my shyness to control my happiness and limit my opportunities in my younger years, I realize that becoming a tutor helped spark my own personal growth and my understanding of my true self. Communication, being sociable, and helping others has become both a passion and my future because of the Writing Center.





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## The Ultimate Test for Confidence

Josielin Pastora, Class of 2018

Being part of the Reed Math and Science Center requires patience, dedication, responsibility, and maturity. But something that our tutors need above everything is confidence and the ability to rely on each other, and in order to achieve this, we decided to take a trip to The Appalachian Challenge Course at The Park School.

Our tutors were required to use their group communication skills, cooperate with each other, use group problem solving skills, and ultimately increase their comfort levels among each other.

One of the activities that our tutors had to do was the “What, Watt, and Whet” which was to test how attentive and fast-paced our tutors were. “It was very interesting and it really made you think,” says De’Juan Clark, Class of 2019. Our tutors formed a circle. There were three items: a rock (“What”), a smaller rock (“Watt”), and a stick (“Whet”). When a tutor received one of the objects, they had to say the name of the object and pass it to the person next to them. What really made it challenging was when the objects were being passed at a fast pace, being passed from the right and left. Sounds easy, right?

Another activity our tutors participated in was called “Original and Perfect Circle.” This activity required our tutors to use their communication skills. The tutors had to form a circle, known as the “Original Circle”. There was a bean bag being tossed and whoever started would say “My name is \_\_\_\_\_ . Here you go \_\_\_\_\_ ” and would say the name of the person they’re throwing it to. Whoever caught it would say “Thank you \_\_\_\_\_ . Here you go \_\_\_\_\_ ” and would do that until everyone got a chance to receive and throw the bean bag. The real challenge came when the tutors were required to do this in the least amount of time possible, in the order they did it the first time. This forced them to get together and make a plan to figure out how to do it as quickly as possible, making sure everyone is attentive and doesn’t end up dropping the bean bag. “It was very effective in team-building,” says Keith Winston, Class of 2018.

And it was very effective, indeed. Our tutors got an experience that really changed their way of thinking and makes them better tutors. It helped improve their communication skills and team problem solving skills. Not only will this only help them while tutoring, but also help them in their personal and academic lives, too.



