

Center for Teaching and Learning

NEW CTL BECOMES STUDENT SUPPORT HUB

Open since the first day of school, the Center for Teaching and Learning has quickly become an essential part of City's academic program. Since all City College students are enrolled in demanding International Baccalaureate courses, the center provides on-site support in reading, writing, math, science and research to help students be successful.

The Joseph Meyerhoff Library provides students with a quiet place to study, research materials, access to technology and research guidance from librarian Jennifer Gaither and librarian's assistant, Mark King.

The Reed Math and Science Center and Writing Center, coordinated by Alisa Engsborg and Lena Tashjian, offer peer tutoring for students during the school day and after school. Tutors work with the faculty to improve students' skills and confidence as they work through challenging IB coursework.

The Research Center, led by Karen Hodges, provides research help for both teachers and students. Students get one-on-one tutoring with research projects. Teachers get help as they advise the Extended Essay, Personal Project and integrate research projects into their courses.

The Cordish Technology Center has provided the space and resources for teachers to equitably integrate technology into their courses. It bridges the "digital divide" that some first generation college students encounter every day by providing laptops and internet access.

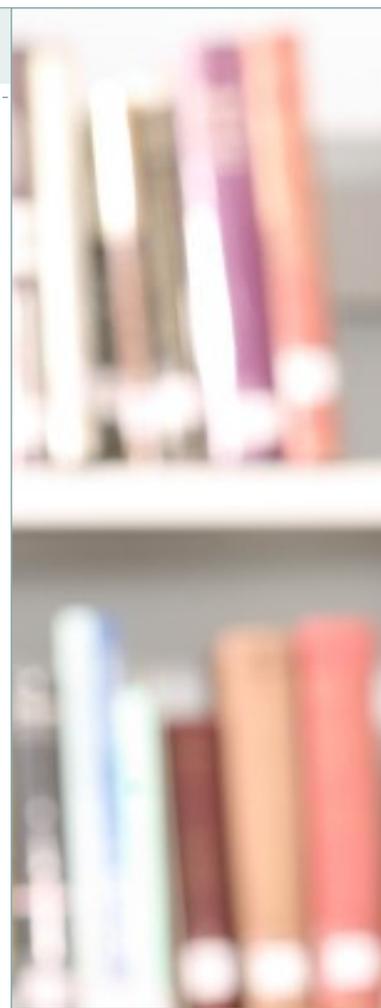
Doetsch Hall has become a premier meeting and performance space for students, guests and faculty. Students, faculty, and guests alike have all marveled at how the space marries City's proud history and vibrant future.

TUTORS PRESENT AT CAPTA CONFERENCE

By Breonna Crank ('17) Writing Tutor

The capital Area Peer Tutoring Association (CAPTA) builds communities between writing centers, promotes advocacy for peer driven programs, and supports the development of local resources. This year the CAPTA conference was held at George Mason University in Virginia. Supported by Stanford Reed ('38) and Lionel Foster ('98), all of the tutors were able to attend and represent City's Center for Teaching and Learning. Despite a highly selective process, ten Writing Center tutors' workshop proposals were accepted and presented.

Tutors had the additional distinction of being the only students to both attend and lead workshops from public or private schools in Baltimore. Tutors and City College faculty enjoyed the atmosphere as they networked with other schools, tutors, led workshops and captured the experience on social media with the hashtag #CAPTA2016.



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FIRST SEMESTER VISITS BY THE NUMBERS

- Meyerhoff Library: 8, 294
- Writing Center: 687
- Reed Center: 731
- Research Center: 441



TAKING THE LEAD TO IMPROVE EDUCATION

By Marie Mokuba, ('17), Writing Tutor

In January, tutors from the BCC Writing Center applied to the *Free Minds Free People* conference that will be held in Baltimore in July. This conference is centered around building a movement to develop and promote education as a tool for liberation. With support from institutions such as the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, the conference will bring together teachers, youth, researchers, and community members from all around the country.

To prepare our proposals, we researched methods we could use to share our experiences with supporting our peers and becoming student leaders. We proposed methods such as holding panel discussions, teaching workshops, and even leading our own youth activism workshop.

We recognize that many schools around the world do not have the same opportunities we do, so we will appreciate the opportunities to connect with others in the hopes more youth operated writing centers will be replicated in public schools across the nation.

“Not only does the center help me with my work, it also gives me someone to look up to who will push me to excellence.”

GRADE 9 IMPACT

By D’aveon Fields ('17) Writing Tutor

Angely, a freshmen, has been utilizing the Writing Center a great deal this semester.

“A lot of teachers recommend the center, so I followed their advice with an open mind,” Angely said.

Her dedication paid off. Between quarters 1 and 2, her grades improved significantly in 5 out of 7 classes.

Initially, tutors helped her understand both the assignment and the expectations; she also used the service to help her adjust to a new school.

“Not only does the center help me with my work, but it also gives me someone to look up to who will push me to excellence,” said Angely.

LEARNING LABS FOR TEACHERS

Contributions from Tyla Ross ('17) and Elijah Eaton ('18), Reed Tutors

Early in the school year, Reed Center Coordinator Alisa Engsborg and Math Department Chair Paul Atkinson reviewed the Harvard University model for Teaching and Learning. In their research, they found an interesting way to improve teacher instruction. At Harvard, the Learning Lab is an interactive space for faculty and students to test teaching before it is used in the classroom. Engsborg and Atkinson challenged our tutors to create a similar model.

To create a learning Lab at City Reed Center tutors have been building a dialectical relationship with teachers in which they ask questions and give feedback. For example, recently tutors met with Geometry teachers to preview an upcoming unit. Teachers presented the unit to tutors and tutors gave feedback and asked questions. As a result, both teachers and tutors had a deeper understanding of the challenges that Geometry students might encounter in the coming weeks.

Another way tutors connect with teachers is through regular communication. Tutors have ongoing electronic conversations with teachers throughout units to keep track of common misunderstandings and also get additional clarification.

The tutors have enjoyed this new innovation in the tutoring model as they become a part of a true learning community. Tutors have the opportunity to not only help the students who seek individual help, but also improve the overall instruction that all students get on a daily basis in the classroom.



EXTENDED ESSAY BLITZ

By Gabe Samuels, ('18), Extended Essay student

Considering the rigorous coursework and numerous long-term projects, City students participating in the full IB Diploma Program are accustomed to hard work. The Extended Essay, a 4000 word research assignment, is completed in the junior year independent of other coursework.

In this essay students are first asked to pick any academic topic they find interesting, then create an original research question and finally respond to it with academic sources. Regardless of how familiar IB students are with such assignments, any help and guidance is always appreciated.

During monthly half days, students working on the Extended Essay congregate in the library, Writing Center, Doetsch Hall and the Cordish Technology Center to continue working through the process. These “workdays” give students the opportunity to not only focus on this large independent assignment, but also take advantage of the many resources in the library, such as faculty advisers, librarian, technology, writing tutors or research material.

Diego Thompson, a starter on City’s varsity basketball team and also an IB junior finds these “blitz” days are a good use of his time. “The workdays help me organize my thoughts so that I can go home and write the essay,” said Thompson.

Another full IB junior, Elijah Eaton, appreciates school time has been dedicated to the independent project. “The workday gives us an opportunity to take a break from the stresses of our IB classes and focus on the Extended Essay,” said Eaton.

Blitz days are a time for students to gather as an academic community of researchers, writers and thinkers. The Center for Teaching and Learning is well suited to give students the space and resources to do all three.

GRADE 10 IMPACT

By India Frederick ('18) and Kaylin Mason ('17), Writing Tutors

Chanan Oshry, a sophomore, reflects what the Writing Center develops in our peer clients. Chanan came to the writing center five times since our opening and as a result, has improved his grade in English and his overall writing skills across subject areas.

“My initial thought of the writing center was that the tutors were only there to help me get ideas and thoughts for my English assignments,” said Chanan. “I learned the tutors were actually there to be a support system and help me with any type of writing assignment.”

Chana was influenced the most by our tutors’ ability to show him how to think before writing instead of trying to do both simultaneously. “My tutors have helped me understand my assignments by clarifying questions and having me think about assignments from a different perspective,” he said.

The writing center’s ability to provide engaging and friendly tutors has and hopefully will continue to impact Chana throughout his learning at Baltimore City College.

GRADE 11 IMPACT

By Brady Carrington ('18), Trell Davis ('18), Kayla Brim ('18), Reed Tutors

According to junior Krystal Randall, the tutors in the Reed Center have helped her improve her IB Standard Level Math grades this year. The tutors are "helpful, patient and hardworking," said Krystal. Between quarters 1 and 2, Krystal also improved her IB Chemistry grade.

Tutors strive to help students improve not just on individual assignments, but also course grades overall. Seeking help becomes a good habit for students like Krystal. "Every time I have an assignment in math, I come to the center for help and the tutors help me break it down, step by step," said Krystal.

In addition to helping students with individual assignments, tutors also help build their students' confidence in their math ability. Each time a client begins a tutoring session, they self evaluate their confidence with the math concepts or skills. After attending numerous sessions during lunch and after school during the first semester, Krystal's evaluation of her confidence in math improved by 66%.

Keep up the good work, Krystal!

LIBRARY COLLECTION EXPANDS

The Meyerhoff library has added 1,638 books to its collection since August. Contributions have come from private donations, the James Patterson Library, the Laura Bush School Foundation, the Fund for Educational Excellence, Stanford Reed ('38), and an online fundraising campaign to kick off our new *honor with a book* program by City parent Sonya Kannam.

Jennifer Gaither, our librarian, has focused on building our collection around the International Baccalaureate's six subject groups: Language and Literature, Language Acquisition, Individuals and Societies, Experimental Sciences, Mathematics and the Arts.

Freshman Savannah Greene was already a voracious reader before she became a

Collegian, but she needs more varied texts and now she has access to the Meyerhoff library collection. "The books here make me so happy," said Savannah. "There is a tremendous variety of books here compared to what I have read before. In addition to lots of new popular fiction, there are also books about women's studies and film that I have really have enjoyed."

Sophomore Caudia Pachero Carranza is an avid reader, too. She comes to the library in morning on her way to class to check out and return books. "When I stared looking at all of the new books, in the library, I couldn't help yelling out loud 'it's a whole new world,'" said Claudia about the new collection.

A FRESHMAN RESEARCH CONVERSATION

Student: Can I research, "To what extent is hip hop popular?"

RC: Is there an answer that it is not?

Student: Probably not.

RC: Could you make that more specific? What have you learned so far?

Student: I've learned that hip hop started in New York and is popular in Japan.

RC: So think about ideas of Human Geography— ideas about culture. How could you pull that together?

Student: Something about cultural appropriation, maybe? "To what extent is hip hop in Japan an example of Cultural Appropriation?"

RC: Is it debatable? Have sources to support it? A critical question appropriate to the area of research?

Student: Yes.

RC: Let's look at some sources.

A JUNIOR RESEARCH CENTER STORY

Tiera walked in to the Research center a little overwhelmed. As a junior working on her Extended Essay, an independent research 4000 word research assignment, Tiera had some interest in writing about Mexican immigration, but she did not have a solid research question to guide her work. She was intrigued by how the events surrounding 9/11 impacted immigration, but she did not have a question that connected her ideas. Tiera's adviser suggested examining the success of the Bush Doctrine, but Tiera was still stuck— so many ideas were new to her and she was unsure of how all of this information fit together. Hence, her visit to the Research Center.

After a solid brainstorming session (which included her adviser being called in to consult), Tiera had a road map of ideas to follow forward. Unfortunately, however, this Research Center story does not end with Tiera's essay magically being drafted within the week. Instead, her story continues. Because that's what good research is all about: learning, revising, asking questions, learning more, trying again— and asking for a little more help along the way.

STUDENT IMPACT: GRADE 12

By Khalil Brim ('17) and Joel Vilche ('17) Writing Tutors

Nazeeh Henderson, a senior, is a prime example of what the writing center can do for a student. Nazeeh visited the writing center eleven times since its opening in October. His initial visits were focused on getting help in English class.

"My tutor helped me better understand my assignments, specifically in my poetry unit. In one essay, my tutor helped me improve my understanding of the writer's message and to organize my ideas more effectively," said Nazeeh.

However, Nazeeh's regular visits to the center have also tremendously improved his grades in two other classes as well. "It feels good that I have a place to go when I need help," Nazeeh says. "At first, I thought I would feel stupid and 'corny' if I went, but it really has impacted my academic life."

Now that Nazeeh feels comfortable with peer support, he wants the center to help more of his peers. "I think the writing center will continue to help fellow Collegians for years to come," said Nazeeh.



"There is a tremendous variety of books here compared to what I have read before. In addition to lots of popular new fiction, there are also books about women's studies and film that I have really enjoyed."

SUPPORTING INQUIRY IN MATH

Contributions from Kenya Edwards ('18), and Jennifer Marquez-Membreno ('18), Reed Tutors

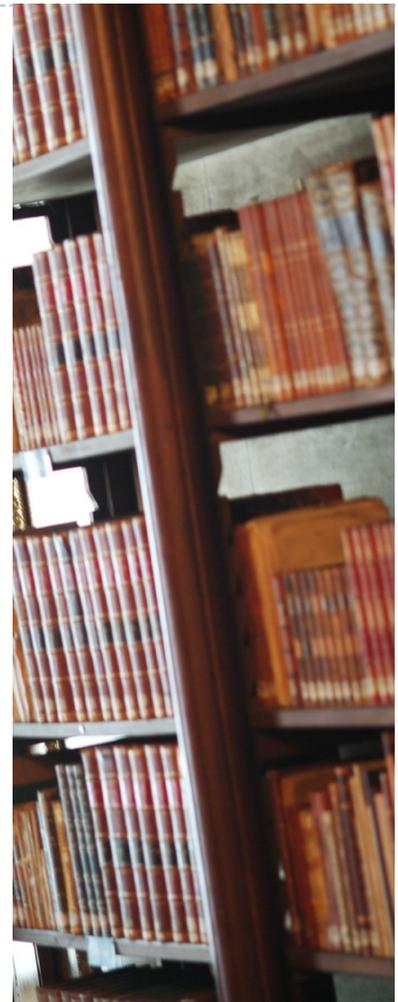
One of our focuses for the Reed Center tutors is to support students with their IB Math Studies Internal Assessment. In this challenging independent and long term assignment, students must select a topic of interest to investigate using mathematical processes. With 242 students enrolled in the IB course, targeted support from Reed Center tutors is invaluable.

The tutors prepare to help clients by looking at sample work, closely studying the grading criteria and preparing for common questions. Under the guidance of their coordinator, Alisa Engsborg, they target the following skills: narrowing down a topic, formulating a plan, collecting information, selecting appropriate mathematical processes, interpreting results, assessing validity of results and structuring and organizing the report.

The tutors' work is making an impact. Two seniors who frequently visited the Reed Center during the first semester earned

significantly higher marks mid year. The IB Math Studies Internal Assessment is graded on a 7 point scale. The largest gain was from one student who improved her score by 5 points by the end of the semester.

The tutors appreciate the opportunity to work in depth with the interesting and challenging assignment.



CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our mission is to support our community of learners— from ninth grade to veteran teachers— to challenge themselves and succeed. The center is a one stop shop for academic support in our newly restored 13,000 square feet space.

All of our students take courses in the challenging International Baccalaureate curriculum because it prepares them for college level work and life long learning. The center for Teaching and Learning is central to our support, providing quiet study space, research material, tutoring, technology and wireless internet.

We are grateful for our donors who made this vision for our students a reality. City Forever!

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

Contributions from Kia Davis ('17) and Dion Thorpe ('18), Reed Tutors

As tutors, students are empowered to be leaders at city. Tutors are expected to lead by example, hold themselves to high expectations and show good judgement throughout the school day. Tutors take great pride in their role, but they also realize they need to learn more than just their academic areas in order to be effective leaders.

Part of becoming leaders is building trust with peers. At times, peer tutors are younger than their clients, which can be unsettling for some. To make every client comfortable, tutors consistently practice professionalism and empathy for all students who seek support.

Another part of leadership is relationship building. When peers come to the center for help, they are clients, but they are also still peers. Developing relationships makes students feel valued and more comfortable at school. Working together and supporting each other is also a natural way to build friendships. Tutors enjoy seeing former and current clients as they travel between classes. Being friendly and welcoming encourages peers to return for more support.

The impact of leadership on our junior and senior tutors is noticeable. Tutor attendance is above that of their peers. They are dedicated to supporting their peers during the school day, but also after school.

Center for Teaching and Learning

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