**Revising a Paper**

Try these various strategies to find what works for you.

1. Take some **time** between writing a paper and starting the revision process. Stepping away (for a few hours or overnight) can help us to view our writing more objectively. Of course, this requires a bit of planning in order to meet assignment deadlines.
2. **Print** the paper. Reading a hard copy helps us to see the paper as a “whole” rather than as individual pages on a computer screen.
3. Read through the paper **multiple times**, with a different purpose each time. Trying to tackle all writing concerns in one reading is often too difficult. General guidelines for multiple readings:
   1. Initially, focus only on ideas: Is the argument clear and well-developed? Are the supporting points logical? Does the writing meet the assignment requirements?
   2. Next, focus on organization, clarity, style, word choice, and documentation.
   3. Finally, focus on editing: grammar, spelling, punctuation, typos, etc.
4. Look over previously-graded papers to see whether the **instructor’s comments** point to any concerns or patterns of error and consider those during the revision process. Writing Center tutors can help with this.
5. Read the paper **out loud, slowly**. Since this process uses a different part of the brain, it can broaden our perspective and enable us to catch things we otherwise might miss. We can sometimes hear things we may not see.



1. A tool that helps with organization is **printing the paper and cutting it up**, by section, paragraph, or sentence. This works well for visual learners.
2. Another tool is glossing a paper: writing **short phrases** next to each paragraph that **summarize** the contents of that paragraph. This provides a view of how ideas are arranged.
3. Read the paper **backwards**, sentence by sentence. This enables the mind to focus on just that section of the text at a time, without the expectation of what’s coming next. That expectation can cause us to miss errors: extra words, missing words, etc.
4. Get the **feedback of a reader**. Saint Rose Writing Center tutors are well-trained and ready to listen, support student writers, and offer their feedback. This can give writers insight about the clarity, organization, and logical of their written work.

Work Cited

“Revising Drafts.” *Handouts*. The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. 23 February 2016. http://writingcenter.unc.edu/ Web.

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