

BY OUR WTS

The Indiana University Writing Tutorial Services Alumni Newsletter

Writing Tutorial Services
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405

Teaching Lessons

WTS Alumnus Sam Ross shares how he's learned that not all writing-tutor tactics transfer to a classroom of teenagers

Brandon Haffner

Sam Ross, a WTS alum now living in Brooklyn, spends a majority of his time instructing teenagers at a nearby public school as part of his work with Teach for America. He's a rather busy guy, given that he is also taking graduate courses at Pace University toward his teaching certification.

His primary focus, though, is on the students he felt compelled to help even before he graduated from IU.

"I had read a lot about the achievement gap between high- and low-income students and thought that it was a frustrating manifestation of inequality in our society," Ross said. "I wanted to join a movement that was fighting against educational disparities."

However, his motivation to work for a good cause is often tested by the high demands of his work.

"Teaching itself is pretty intense inside the room, and there are usually a thousand things happening at once," he said. "Whether it's classroom management or working with low-level readers or trying to come up with a reading or assignment that will engage

students' interests while still hitting state standards, it's like educational whack-a-mole. When you nail something on the head, another issue pops right up."

The grueling nature of Ross's teaching work is a humbling experience, he said. It's much different from his WTS background, helping IU students with their college papers, and perhaps more difficult.

"With WTS, I mostly dealt with students who had one or two specific issues that could be adequately addressed in a tutorial," he said. "With the work I do now, it's more about trying to get students to the stage of actually completing a written piece."

Most current WTS tutors become concerned when students visit us too close to their paper deadlines or when they've forgotten to ask their professors important questions. For Ross, now, his job is a bit more focused on the fundamentals.

"Most of the time, it's about getting them to turn in their homework," he said.

His work for Teach for America isn't all grueling, though, and he has

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Career change? No objection.

Tutoring skills prove practical for two alums who have chosen the legal field

Brandon Haffner

Some of our WTS alumni have moved on to explore the world of law.

Jon Zarich and his wife, Katie, both WTS alums, currently attend IUPUI's law school evening program.

And as many recent graduates do, Jon and Katie waited a while before jumping into the rigors of professional school.

"I worked in the Indiana House of Representatives for two years as a legislative assistant after graduating from IU," Jon said.

It was only after those two years that he enrolled in IUPUI's evening program. Then, he switched his day job to work for the Insurance Institute of Indiana, a state trade association representing insurers before the Indiana government. There, he works as a lobbyist five days a week.

"The great thing about lobbying is you meet a lot of great people and get to work with them on interesting issues," Jon said.

Working has its downsides, of course. With work every day and school each night, Jon is a busy man.

"I'd like to say I study when I get

home from class every night, but that just doesn't happen all the time," Jon said. "Gotta make time for the 'The Office.'"

Katie Zarich seems to be just as busy.

During the day, she works as the director of public affairs at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

"I manage our public relations, marketing and government affairs programs," she said. "No day is ever the same. I attend a lot of meetings, and think a lot about strategy."

Beyond her aspirations in the legal realm, she's motivated to make positive changes in her current job, too.

"It's my goal for the IMA to be as visible as possible in Indianapolis, central Indiana and beyond," she said.

Her high level of motivation and strong work ethic come with a price, however.

"Now that I'm in law school and working full time, I sacrifice quite a bit of sleep and free time," she said.

So, what's so great about law that it makes Jon and Katie willing to give up time for fun and sleep, anyway?

Each of them has distinct reasons.

"I have always found the law interesting," Jon said. "It forms the basis of how people are required to treat each other. I like to know that if someone mugs me while I am walking down the street, there is a legal remedy I can pursue."

Katie feels passionate about the law because it fulfills what she's always wanted to do as an adult.

"I always thought I'd go to law school one day," she said. "In some ways, law is a great foundation for public service, and I've always considered a career in public service."

Neither of them, of course, has forgotten their WTS heritage. Jon said he believes that working for WTS was great experience for his law career.

"WTS taught me to read critically, listen carefully, and communicate effectively," he said. "No matter what job you will do, you need those skills, especially in a legal environment."

Katie's WTS past has helped her not only with her legal writing, but with her art museum position.

"WTS helped me give tactful and constructive criticism," she said. "This skill has been very helpful with my employees."

Jon and Katie seem to have found paths to bright futures together. Though they're working hard every day of the week, they seem to have found a way to keep things in order.

Jon said the two of them only have about one year of school left; then it's off into another phase of life.

By Our WTS is produced by and for the peer tutor alumni of Writing Tutorial Services, Indiana University's writing center.

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At WTS End

In May, eight graduating seniors will add their names to the WTS alumni roster. To celebrate this milestone in their lives and their contributions to Writing Tutorial Services, we asked them to reflect on their time as peer tutors and tell us a bit about their goals for the future.

Sarah-Anne Lanman

Hometown: Cleveland, Ohio

Majors: English, Germanic studies

Years tutoring: one

Favorite WTS memory: The look on

students' faces when a light bulb turns on in their heads because they have major breakthroughs with their papers.

Most memorable tutorial: A student working on an art history paper came in to the ASC because her teacher offered extra credit to students who brought their papers in, and she seemed a little skeptical about the tutorial being useful. However, at the end of the tutorial, she said it had been very helpful and ended up coming in again a few weeks later for a different paper.

Words of wisdom: As much as you may want to, you cannot make a student's paper perfect!

Future plans: I definitely plan on continuing to write, and I may give law school a spin. I'm interested in working with environmental and/or human rights issues and would eventually love to publish a book of poetry.



Caitlin Zittkowski

Hometown: Munster, Indiana

Majors: English, French, art history

Years tutoring: one

Favorite WTS

memory: I've loved the time spent talking with other tutors. I've met so many wonderful people here!

Most memorable tutorial:

One time at the Teter ASC, a student had plagiarized her professor's example essay almost word for word. When I gently pointed that out to her and suggested we try some re-wording, she told me to shut up and do my job correctly. Excuse me?!

Words of wisdom: If students feel good about themselves, they write better papers! I've always found words of encouragement do wonders for getting the creative juices flowing.

Future Plans: I have a job in Bloomington for the summer, and then I am moving to France for a year-long teaching assistantship. Beyond that, I plan to go to grad school sometime in my 20s and make enough money to keep me from moving back in with my parents.



Sarah-Anne Lanman

Hometown: Goshen, Indiana

Major: biology

Years tutoring: three

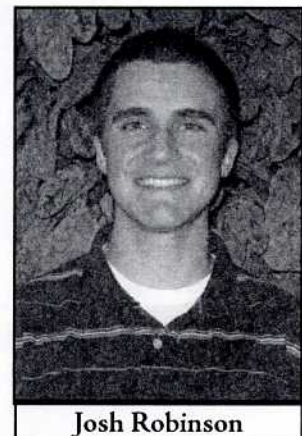
Favorite WTS memory: Interacting with the other tutors has been great. I remember spending spring 2007 working with Andrew to figure out how we could most efficiently watch college basketball on Thursday nights at Teter. I think we came up with a decent system.

Most memorable tutorial:

There have been really good and really bad ones, but a specific one doesn't come to mind.

Words of wisdom: Don't doubt your own tutoring skills. You went through extensive training and are obviously fit for the position, so just do what you know how to do.

Future plans: I'll spend the next four years at the Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago. Beyond that, check back with me in four years.



Josh Robinson

