



**2023 SPRING CONFERENCE**



**EXPLORING THE FUTURE TOGETHER**

MAY 8-10 • SEATTLE, WA

# **College Essay Coaching**

## ***Managing the Parent Journey***



**Amy McVeigh, Smart College Selection**  
**Susan Knoppow, Wow Writing Workshop**

# Introductions

Amy McVeigh  
*Smart College Selection*

Susan Knoppow  
*Wow Writing Workshop*

# Intro Questions

-  What does it look like when parents are helpful?
-  What does it look like when parents are unhelpful?

# Tools

What tools do you have to reinforce their positive behavior and prevent or address the negative?

# Before the Writing Process Begins

Step in Your Process	Parent Message	Student Message	Method/Tools	Notes
<b>Pre-Contract</b>	We are experts. Parents have a role.	N/A	Website, marketing materials  'Script' during inquiry call	Define parent role. Required week-long workshop. Eight-step essay development process.
<b>Contracting</b>	Let's be clear.	Your actions have consequences.	Contract	<i>"Parents also agree that the consultant .... does not create or write any part of college applications and/or essays..."</i>
<b>Start-Up Meeting</b>	This is the student's process.	You are the driver. Parents, student & IEC have different roles.	Family Meeting	Ask student: <i>"What role do you think your parents will want to play?"</i>
<b>List Development Phase</b>	Here's how to support your student.	Fit matters. Your voice matters.	Parent Emails & Jobs	Parent email just before student gets list: Recap process to date. Provide tips on how to support. Provide language to use.
<b>Application Strategy Phase</b>	It is getting real. We need to clarify roles, timing, and tasks.	You are the driver. Your voice is essential.	Family Meeting  Who Does What Checklist	3 of 21 Checklist items relate to essay: 'Write essays' 'Review essays/application' 'Final proofread essays/application'



# The First Essay (Common App)

Step in Your Process	Parent Message	Student Message	Method/Tools	Notes
<b>Essay Start-Up Phase</b>	This is how we work.	Same	Agreement (and Payment)	Everything we do is built on process, plan, and schedule.  We (student, parent, coach) have agreed on this schedule. You have reserved time.
<b>Idea Generation</b>	Student responsibility: Prework is due before your child meets with the coach.	Your choices have consequences: Prework is due before we meet.	Templated emails, starting up to 4 weeks in advance.	Emails include info about scheduling an appointment and required prework.  Consequences are low, but they exist.
<b>Idea Selection</b>	None	Student ideas are conversation starters.	Brainstorm framework.  Coach training, clear goals for brainstorm.	Coach is listening for effective topics, not “best” topics.
<b>Draft 1</b>	Your child is off to a strong start.	Focus on content.	Templated emails, standard content exercises.	This is why the essay topic is effective: focus on characteristics.
<b>Drafts 2 - X</b>	This is the messy middle.	Focus on structure.  Opportunities to make editorial choices.	Templated emails.  Standard structure exercises.  Observations and recommendations, not edits.	When your child is done, here’s how to read their essay.  Continue emphasizing context, characteristics, effectiveness.
<b>Final Draft</b>	Your child has made great progress.	Point out why the essay is effective and successful.  Emphasize characteristics.		We have paid close attention to willingness and ability.  The goal is not a perfect essay; it’s an essay that reflects who the applicant is, beyond what they have accomplished.

# Subsequent Essays

Step in Your Process	Parent Message	Student Message	Method/Tools	Notes
<b>Transition to supplements, PIQs, etc.</b>	The first essay was a teaching essay.		Templated emails.  Week by week schedule.	I learned about your child; they learned about the essay writing process.  They have everything they need to write the rest of their essay.  Now we will work strategically on groups of supplements, by school.  Every essay will have a theme of sorts.  Every essay will go through the same phases (content, structure, polish) though we may combine some phases depending on how much we use from previously written supplements.
<b>Idea Generation</b>			Weekly check-in	
<b>Idea Selection</b>			Weekly check-in	
<b>Draft 1</b>			Weekly check-in	
<b>Drafts 2 - X</b>			Weekly check-in	
<b>Final Draft</b>			Weekly check-in	

# Final Question

-  Name one thing you will consider or do differently in the coming months?
-  What might you have to add, cut, or reconsider in order to make that change?

# Resources

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