Guidelines for Dramaturgs at Festival Playhouse

1. The Job:
(Much of the following needs to be accomplished well before the auditions of a production, usually the term before)

   A. For previously produced plays, serve as Literary and Research Resource for the Director. For all research, always consult Director and Designers on needs of the particular production - i.e., which direction to take the research.
      a. Research on author and read other major plays.
      b. Research particular productions - reviews of landmark productions (like Moscow Art Theatre's The Seagull) or criticism of playwright and/or play.
      c. Research all unusual references in play.
      d. Research on period, location, themes, and issues of play.
      e. Assemble a packet of materials based on above research that can made available to the company in a presentation at an early rehearsal - either by copying or one copy in the Green Room.

   B. For new plays, serve as a script consultant to both the playwright and director.
      a. Respond to both the playwright and director about the dramaturg's understanding of the script - dramatic action, characters, themes, language - and act as a sort of "mirror of the script."
      b. Suggest to the playwright and director what may not be clear about any of the above. NEVER suggest a line or "write your own scene" but simply ask questions and share reactions. It's much better to ask "Why doesn't she tell him that in the first scene if it's so important to her?" rather than "I think the play should end this way."
      c. Always, always, ALWAYS support the playwright - listen, ask, confirm. NEVER say "I don't want to write the play for you, but ..." Your job is to not write the play, but to help a fellow artist in a collaborative process. That is where the "dramaturg's ownership" in a new script lies.
d. Remember each play is in a different state of development and each playwright is a different person. There is no magic formula that works every single time - so just keep coming back to what's on the page!

C. **Whether new script or not**, work with Michelle Connolly on the lobby display - selecting texts, writing time lines of periods, or author, helping find and duplicate or mount images.

D. **Whether new script or not**, in consultation with Ed, Director, or playwright, write essay for program (or display).

E. **Whether new script or not**, dramaturgs should attend rehearsals - first few company meetings and read -thrus, selected run-thrus in consultation with director and/or playwright, and be prepared to give notes to director and/or playwright. The feedback should be about the clarity of the dramatic action, themes, and overall impact of the playwright's story, not acting choices, use of space, pace, visual quality of design, etc. Will the audience "get the play?" Dramaturgs should never give notes to the actors or designers but confer only with directors and/or playwrights.