

## Guidelines for Using Writing Consultants in Classrooms

### Things consultants do well with students:

- ✓ decode writing prompts, brainstorm, and prewrite
- ✓ build organizing strategies for assignments or essays
- ✓ develop appropriate academic language and voice
- ✓ provide effective peer feedback during workshop days
- ✓ assist students in utilizing feedback to revise their essays
- ✓ help students embrace writing as a process
- ✓ work one-to-one with selected students
- ✓ facilitate small groups, including active learning stations
- ✓ answer questions students may have about writing
- ✓ validate student efforts to learn and improve
- ✓ situate students in a college writing community
- ✓ nurture confidence in reading, writing, and critical thinking



### Suggestions for a successful experience with your writing consultant:

- Communicate regularly! We encourage our faculty and writing consultants to email each other regarding important class information as needed. Additionally, while consultants do not have the expertise of faculty, they have a great sense of what is and isn't working well for students. Conversations with consultants can sometimes illuminate difficulties that students are encountering.
- While consultants need a certain amount of respect for their role, it should be clear to students that consultants are peers and not instructors. Consultants are trained to help with student writing, and are not teaching assistants or lab assistants.
- Have a plan and a pedagogical purpose for utilizing consultants in the classroom. To some extent, consultants have a number of things they've been trained to do on their own, but they work best when they have direction from faculty.
  - Example: When the consultant is working with students (either one-on-one or in groups) it helps to give them some guidance on what to focus on, such as building in more details or support, or helping students build stronger thesis statements.

### What happens if things aren't going well?

As director of the Writing Center, Denise Stephenson is always available to help discuss the best use of writing consultants and to address any of your questions or concerns. Anne Fleming is the writing coach working directly with in-class consultants. She's also available to specifics. Please welcome her into your classrooms occasionally to observe consultants and provide them feedback on their performance.

Rarely, a consultant may demonstrate behavior that an instructor finds problematic in the classroom. In such instances, please contact the Writing Center right away so that we can deal with any tardiness, absenteeism, or inappropriateness on the part of your consultant. Please note that this does *not* mean the consultant will be immediately fired or punished. It simply means we will step in to redirect them to improve their classroom performance to benefit your students' success. We will always do this promptly and discreetly, as employer to employee. This a paid job, and in the interest of the students and the classroom, it is important that consultants model responsibility.