

# How to Talk about Writing Center Visits

Faculty are encouraged to promote the use of the Writing Center in their classes. Students may feel nervous or reluctant about visiting the center because they have never used the service before, think the center is only for really bad or really good writers, or don't consider themselves to be writers. Below are some talking points to help faculty decide how to introduce Writing Center visits to students and what students can take away from their sessions.

## Writing is Never a Solitary Act

Writing is shaped by the perspectives of others, meaning nothing is ever written without a history of influence of other people and particular writing communities. The most robust academic writing, even when produced by experts, only makes it to print after peer reviewers, editors, and proofreaders contribute to the work, to name a few parties. In the Writing Center, writers can purposefully consider other perspectives on their work and how writers can best navigate those perspectives toward success.

## Writing is Recursive

Writing in standard edited academic English, a specific discipline, or a particular genre (document type) is a performance, and effective performances involve continual organizing and refining. Writing is often discussed as a linear process with clear "brainstorming," "first draft," "revision," and "final draft" stages. However, in reality, writing is a messy negotiation between the writer and the situation, and writers are often confused, overwhelmed, or conflicted about how to move forward with a project. Writing Center tutors are good sounding boards for wrestling out what a writer should do next.

## Talking to a Non-expert can Help

The ability to share knowledge (something we hope every graduate develops) rests in the skill of clear communication. Sharing writing with a tutor who may not be an expert in a writer's research topic can help identify areas in a draft that some readers may find confusing or unclear. Students can use writing center sessions to ensure their ideas can be understood by a wide audience. Writing center sessions can even help students entering the job market learn how to clearly and effectively communicate their experiences to perspective employers.

## Learning and Collaboration can Happen Outside the Classroom

Classes are designed to cultivate learning and collaboration behaviors that transfer to situations outside of the classroom. Incorporating Writing Center sessions into a course is one way faculty can encourage the application of learning and collaboration behaviors in the broader campus community. The Writing Center does not attempt to duplicate (or make up for) the classroom experience. It is not a substitute for missing class. The center is a different space, a tool for thinking about writing, where students can have a friendly conversation with peers about what is going on in their writing lives. In the center, students connect with other students to collaborate in finding motivation, insights about communication across the university, and success.