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On Location

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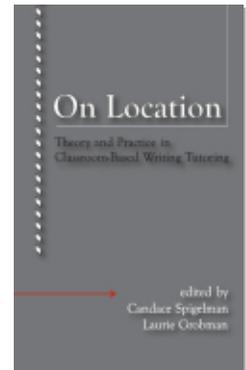
Published by Utah State University Press

Spigelman, Candace & Grobman, Laurie.

On Location: Theory and Practice in Classroom-Based Writing Tutoring.

Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



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APPENDIX

WORKING WITH WAC CONSULTANTS AT GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

As the purpose for writing-intensive courses in the various disciplines is to offer sequenced writing experiences with feedback, finding ways to work with graduate assistants that are appropriate and effective in particular disciplines is essential. Following are three “models” to consider as the professor and the writing consultant work together to meet the needs of the students in writing-intensive courses. Ideally, the writing consultant could incorporate all three models during the semester.

Students in writing-intensive classes need to know not only that writing is an important part of the learning process in a course, but also that someone is there to help the professor help them with the writing aspects of the subject. Early in the semester, within the first week preferably, the professor should introduce the writing consultant to the class. The professor and the writing consultant should explain the kinds of writing tasks that will occur during the semester and the role that the writing consultant will play in guiding students toward meeting the expectations of the professor (and the discipline).

SUGGESTED MODELS

Writing Consultant as Participant/Guide

In some situations, and especially the first semester a graduate student works with the writing-intensive course for a professor, an effective method for communication and for meeting the needs of students is to have the writing consultant observe the class as a participant for much of the semester. This model serves many purposes. The consultant is available to the students in the course who are then more likely to seek help and advice on their writing; it gives the graduate student an opportunity to observe the professor and to understand more clearly the expectations for the writing experiences in the class; it keeps the graduate student up-to-date about the content issues in the course; it builds community among the writing consultant, the students, and the professor. Some writing consultants and professors may want to include observation for only certain

parts of the course, and others may want to involve the graduate student more consistently during the semester. Also, as the consultant is present and becomes comfortable with the classroom setting, the professor may choose to ask the consultant for short presentations about the writing process and assignments as they emerge during the semester.

WAC Consultant as Guide

The professor and the writing consultant may choose to hold specific office hours, during which the writing consultant is available to students for face-to-face feedback on writing assignments. The place for these office hours should be arranged through the professor's department, or the WAC director may be able to arrange some time for these meetings in the writing center. In addition, writing consultants may choose to create a handout for students to inform them of these hours and to explain what students should bring to the feedback sessions. The consultants will focus on writing issues defined by the professor and guide students toward the kinds of writing valued in the discipline. Once a week or so the professor and the writing consultant should meet to review expectations, assignments, and to look at models of "good" writing appropriate for the assignment. The consultant will share concerns and successes, and together the consultant and professor can monitor progress.

Some professors may choose to conduct some feedback sessions along with the writing consultant (especially during the first part of the semester). These collaborative sessions are helpful to both the students and the writing consultants as they hear directly from the professor issues regarding content and writing pertinent to the course.

Writing Consultant as Cyber Guide

Along with the office hours for face-to-face feedback, some writing consultants and their professors may choose to work with students online. During the introduction to the consultant, students may be given an e-mail address to which they may send drafts and questions concerning the writing process and assignments. The writing consultant would reply over e-mail, providing feedback and answering questions. This e-mail address may be available through the Web site of the course, or the consultant may choose to obtain a special e-mail address through the university for this purpose. During the regular meetings between the writing consultant and the professor, the process and progress of this model of feedback should be carefully monitored.

These suggestions are meant to provide professors and writing consultants with a few ways to think about working together in writing-intensive courses. We would welcome any feedback regarding successes and pitfalls of these options, as well as other ways to work with students and their writing.