A Tale of Two Courses: Using Praxis to Link Writing Center Training with First-Year Composition

Barbara L. Gordon and Cassandra Kircher

This article explicates the benefits of linking writing center consultant training with first-year composition and provides readers with guidance for engaging in such a collaboration.

In the best of times, students training to be writing center consultants are empowered to work creatively with writers and professors as part of an integrated enterprise that contributes to teaching and learning on their campuses. In the worst of times, students training to be writing center consultants are disempowered, caught between faculty and students and seen as incidental to classroom instruction. We—a writing center director and a first-year composition teacher—sought to create the best of times by embarking on a collaboration that differed to a notable extent from past attempts to bring writing center instruction out from a fixed space. We initially began our partnership because writing center consultants were unable to immediately apply what they were learning in their training class. However, our aim ultimately became to advance not only the educational goals of a writing center training course but also those of a first-year composition course through interweaving assignments and class activities. We sought to create an interdependent space that would enable students in first-year composition to have individualized consulting for each of their major assignments while providing the writing center students with an experience that put praxis at the heart of their learning.

At our university all students are required to take one section of first-year composition that focuses on argument and closely adheres to the Council of Writing Program Administrators’ “WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition.” The writing center course, titled Writing Center Workshop, is a junior-level credit-bearing course offered each semester. Though mostly populated with English education students, it is taken by students with a variety of majors, in particular communication and history. Only undergraduates work as consultants in our center, all of whom have completed the workshop course. The center itself operates on a drop-in or appointment basis and is located in the library, with a satellite location in the campus multicultural center.

Though institutions configure first-year composition and consultant training courses in a variety of ways, we can imagine that, with slight modification, the
collaboration we engaged in could be transferred to any educational setting, from large public two-year colleges and research universities to smaller private institutions such as ours. Whether the training course is at the undergraduate or graduate level, it would be possible to pair it with any course involving plentiful writing, as long as both courses take place at the same time. Even those institutions that do not offer a credit-bearing writing center training course could potentially pair consultants with students in a writing class, or a writing-intensive class, if writing center consultants coordinate their schedules so as to be available to meet during the other course’s class time.

In our case, by combining a class of fifteen consultants-in-training with a class of twenty first-year composition students four times during the semester, we were able to create a unique learning opportunity in which the content and assignments in one course were dependent to a significant degree on the content and assignments of the other, each furthering students’ achievement on the two different sets of course objectives. This symbiotic relationship opened up a powerful pedagogical space for praxis and had the added and unexpected benefit of leveling power imbalances. The roles students inhabited as consultants and writers were broken down, as was the authority inherent in our roles as teachers, making both classes more democratic.

Praxis and Our Point of Departure

Our partnership took place in writing center history after centers had moved beyond their literal and disciplinary walls to be more physically accessible to students and to be more overtly connected with disciplines outside of English. As a result, many universities now host writing centers in various departments and residence halls throughout their campuses. This broadening also took place through involving writing center staff with faculty across the curriculum, such as happened at Brown University in its 1980s fellows program (Writing Center). In this program, and several others like it, consultants typically are assigned to work as aides to faculty, helping them consider how writing could be incorporated into a particular class, and as aides to students, helping them learn the conventions of a discipline or the writing expectations of a professor. A writing fellow might make an introductory appearance in the classroom, but he or she mostly works with the faculty member or students outside of class. In the mid-1990s onward, even closer associations with classroom culture took place, such as the one at City College of New York in which writing tutors held conferences with first-year writers in classrooms during class time, more like the association we forged (Soliday).

This physical movement out from home-based centers corresponded to the period when scholars began questioning what theoretical material should be privileged in writing center training courses. Given limited time, writing directors must consider how much emphasis to place on theory, and what particular theory, in juxtaposition to how much emphasis to place on practice. What is valued and
evaluated in writing center training rests to a great degree on the way the director conceives of the mission of a writing center. As Sue Dinitz and Jean Kiedaisch note:

For Steve North and Muriel Harris they [writing centers] are places that above all nurture the individual writer. For Ken Bruffee and those running writing fellows programs, they help writers learn academic discourse. For Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, as well as Bruffee, they are sites for collaborative learning. For Marilyn Cooper and Nancy Grimm, the postmodern writing center offers a place where students can create an identity and achieve agency within the academy. (63)

Most consultant training courses attempt to train consultants to forward all of the above objectives to varying extents, but the emphasis has changed. In the mid-1980s, courses were more grounded in job-specific training for tutorials. In examining the syllabi of seventy-five tutor-training courses, primarily at the undergraduate level, Judy Gill found that more than 52 percent of the courses required that students work in the center and 36 percent of the students in these courses observed veteran consultants conducting conferences (3). Gill also found that more than two-thirds of the courses required one of two books, The Practical Tutor by Emily Meyer and Louise Z. Smith or Muriel Harris’s Teaching One-to-One (3), both seminal texts focusing on the practical aspect of consulting, the approach most aligned with the birth of centers.

At our jumping-off point, the emphasis had shifted along the same lines as the teaching of first-year composition, to a postmodern theoretical approach. Rather than focusing largely on writing ability, such as through developing a more sophisticated writing process, first-year writing courses now increasingly encourage students to develop an understanding of the contexts in which writing takes place, often critically assessing power dynamics in college and the larger society. Writing center courses followed suit, moving to some degree from a focus on what takes place during a conference to a focus that analyzes how writing centers are situated in the landscape of higher education and how conferences can be used to critique larger cultures (Cooper). In 2000, Rebecca Jackson, Carrie Leverenz, and Joe Law noted in “(RE)Shaping the Profession: Graduate Courses in Writing Center Theory, Practice, and Administration” that students were examining centers, and sometimes writing across the curriculum along with the field at large, in the context of their own and other institutions’ position in universities and in the public sphere confirming that such a move had taken place at the graduate level (138–50).

Though this postmodern movement has occurred, the main objective in the writing center course in our collaboration remained that consultants develop a broad repertoire of strategies, along with a heightened awareness of how to skillfully implement those strategies during a conference. Considering and critiquing the role of writing in the academy and society are necessary for the best consulting to take place, but praxis, how composition theory is applied to conferencing, remained at the heart of the consultants’ education. Wider social and political issues emerged in our course discussions and students’ reflections, but these were always considered in light of how such knowledge could be useful in working one-to-one with writers.
Praxis and the Practicalities of Our Collaboration

Coordinating our collaboration had to be done a semester ahead of time. In addition to requesting that our two classes be scheduled concurrently in order for classroom meetings to take place, we also needed to synchronize our course planning. We each orchestrated our assignments and timed when our students would meet around the following four types of conferences.

> Prewriting Heuristics—scheduled immediately after the composition students received their first major writing assignment
> Organization—scheduled in the midstages of the composition students’ second major writing project
> Editing and Documentation—scheduled in the second part of the semester, shortly before the composition students’ third paper was due
> Final Conference—scheduled during the last class session, designed to help composition students complete their last paper and for consultants to take their final exam

Students in both classes were familiar with the timing and nature of these conferences since the meetings were on our syllabi. Students made preparations and were anticipating, usually quite eagerly, each of the four sessions. Those in first-year composition were instructed to bring two copies of their draft to a conference. The writing consultants’ preparation, by contrast, was necessarily more involved. More than a week before a session, in addition to discussing the assignment on which the composition students were working, the consultants read and took a quiz on the theoretical material that they would apply in the upcoming conference. They also engaged in role-playing scenarios and discussed conference approaches. Because of this preparation, and because most of the consultants had completed first-year composition, they possessed an understanding of first-year writing course culture and, in particular, the culture of the writing class with which they were working.

We strove to generate valuable experiences for students in both classes, with some elements of the collaboration focused more on the needs of the composition students, while other elements focused more on the needs of the consultants. For example, each time students were brought together for conferences we attempted to create novel pairings. Encountering new writers each session gave consultants experience with a variety of writers, mimicking what happens in the writing center where, more often than not, they meet with a new writer each time they consult. First-year students benefited from novel pairings as well since they encountered a variety of consultant styles. In doing so they came to know that a conference with one consultant is not reflective of how all consultants conduct conferences. We anticipated that many of these first-year students would return to the writing center in the future and ask for a particular consultant if they found a consultant to be especially helpful.

The locations of the conferences privileged both groups of students in different ways. The first two conferences took place in the first-year composition classroom. After we gave a brief orientation talk in which we related the focus of
that day’s conference and entertained questions, we assigned pairings and let students decide where to meet, some choosing to stay in the classroom, others heading to empty classrooms, lounges, or hallways nearby. Our supposition was that bringing the consultants into the composition students’ space could empower the first-year writers, this being their arena. Midway through the semester, we switched the meeting location to the writing center itself, which is housed in the university library. We did so primarily to enable us to have more plentiful spaces for conferences, but this move also had the benefit of introducing first-year students to the writing center’s home space and of giving consultants the opportunity to work on their turf.

Since composition students outnumbered consultants, some conferences were triads rather than pairs, with two students per consultant. Conferences lasted twenty minutes, after which the composition and consulting classes regrouped separately. The composition students anonymously completed brief feedback forms directly following their conferences that enabled the consultants to reflect on and learn from that session (see Appendix C for Response Forms Distributed to First-Year Writers).

Benefits of Praxis: The Point of View of the Writing Center Director

Our collaboration helped me to solve two problems with which I had been wrestling during my many years training writing center consultants. First, I was able to assuage students’ lagging interest in theoretical material since the practical application of theory had the expected benefit of enhanced student engagement. Because students realized that they would be applying theoretical concepts immediately after learning them, they were highly motivated to complete assignments and master material. In anticipating their conferences, consultants took seriously class role-playing and writing practice dialogues. They even engaged in some good-natured peer pressure and laughter as they considered how they each would fare when they met with their writers. On the days of the conference sessions, consultants were excited, nervous actually, wanting to do their best, knowing the first-year students were less savvy about writing in college than they were and sincerely enthused about helping them.

Class discussions became more focused and fruitful. Previous to linking training with the composition course, my students would be studying a specific heuristic, but the chance that they would soon have a writing center conference in which they could use that particular heuristic was slim. In pairing our courses, the type of conference the consultants experienced was assured. In addition, all the consultants were applying the same theoretical construct to the same assignment. Comparative approaches to the conference situation were thus possible, with everyone able to contribute based on her or his own anticipated, or recent, conference. It is not surprising that class discussion was substantive.

Second, linking courses enabled me to resolve a nagging concern: how to fairly and thoroughly assess students’ consulting abilities. Many directors face this problem. Though the application of theory into practice is the primary emphasis of most writing center courses and is a paramount concern for directors, direct a-
essment of consultants’ conference skill is rarely reflected in course grading. In her analysis of syllabi, Gill found that students usually write reflective pieces in which they consider how their readings and experiences as consultants are related, but it appears consultant conferences are infrequently observed and evaluated firsthand (3–4). Terese Thonus also found that indirect assessment is the status quo in evaluating writing center consultants’ abilities, as well as in assessing the effectiveness of writing centers.

Unfortunately, the time necessary to conduct direct assessment can be prohibitive. Before pairing our courses, I observed students consult in the writing center, but sitting in on up to twenty individual conferences proved impractical. In the case of a primarily drop-in center, such as the one at my institution, there is no guarantee that a conference will take place. An additional drawback to observing consultants with writers is the variable nature of conferences. I might observe one consultant work with a writer on understanding an assignment, another on organization, and yet another on documentation. It is difficult to judge which students are truly exemplary given such different situations. Along with the many types of conferences, the variety of assignments being addressed makes assessment less reliable. An individual consultant’s facility in conducting a conference is revealed far more clearly when key variables are held constant for all, with everyone addressing the same assignment at close to the same point in the writer’s process.

With our course collaboration, these variables were held constant, enhancing the reliability of indirectly assessing student conferences. I employed additional means to augment validity and reliability since, along with an evaluation rubric (see Appendix A and B for Writing Center Final Exam and Rubric), I had at my disposal a copy of the assignment being addressed, a copy of any writing the writer brought to the conference, and the writer’s and consultant’s conference reflections (see Appendix C for Response Forms Distributed to First-Year Writers). Even more than when I sat in on conferences, in using this information with variables held constant, I felt confident I could assess how well students were conducting conferences, where they needed more support, and what their strengths and weaknesses were.

**Benefits of Praxis: The Point of View of the Composition Instructor**

Like my colleague, I viewed our implementation of praxis and the linking of our courses as a success. Although I could not observe all that went on during conferences, I did witness my students thinking harder about their work because another interested reader would respond to it. In essence the consultants became a real audience, and one that was trained to give tailored feedback. My students looked forward to the consultants coming to class, were consistently prepared for their arrival, and took the sessions to heart.

Besides students’ enjoyment of the conferences and the opportunity to strengthen the final draft of a paper, linking the two classes together helped me to reinforce a mainstay of writing pedagogy: that writing is a process. From the beginning of the semester my students understood that the consultants were trained to
help them during different and quite specific points in writing their papers, and
that someone besides me, and beyond the classroom, valued prewriting and the
data of feedback and revisions. Although composition students frequently work
in peer-group workshops during class, and although writing instructors sometimes
schedule writing center consultants to come into their classes to help orchestrate
these peer-group workshops as Julie Anderson and Susan Wolff Murphy do, the
kind of close semester-long collaboration in which we engaged emphasized process.
Involving students in conferencing at different stages for each paper slowed down
their composing. Not surprisingly, by being slowed down, the process became
transparent. My students saw that a wider community realizes that strong papers
are seldom written in one session the night before they are due.

Students also experienced consulting at its best, diffusing some concerns
that may keep first-year students from using a writing center, such as a consultant
not understanding the assignment or not knowing how to respond to a writing
concern. Consultants were not only familiar with the assignment and prepared to
 respond to a particular moment in the work of preparing a paper, but they could
easily access the writing center director or me if they had questions or needed advice.

Of course, creating such an ideal conference situation could spawn future
liabilities. In going to the writing center, students may encounter instances when
a consultant does struggle with interpreting a professor’s assignment, when the
consultant is not well prepared to address the writer’s specific needs, or when the
wait to work with a consultant is inordinately long. However, some of these issues
are mitigated because as a result of their in-class conferences, my students learned
over time to be responsible participants—ones who bring their assignments to the
conferences and are cognizant of the aspect of the writing process they needed to
address. They also became knowledgeable about what a conference should look
like and are now able to recognize if one falls short of the mark. Being able to
distinguish these differences ultimately empowers students and could help them
lobby for and create better conference situations for themselves.

Along with my students, I, too, became more aware of what the writing
center provides. Before our partnership, I felt it was part of my responsibility to
educate my composition classes about where the center was located, how it worked,
and when it was open, and I encouraged my students to frequent it. I distributed
information the writing center disseminated, and I invited consultants to class to
give brief descriptions of the services. However, once I watched my students en-
gage with consultants firsthand, I realized that I had only been guessing about the
sophistication of what took place in writing center conferences. I am not alone.
Because writing centers have complicated relationships to academic departments
and exist largely as independent entities in higher education separate from the
classroom, even those faculty members teaching first-year composition or those
who work with writing fellows are not fully familiar with writing center culture
and purposes, nor does the introductory printed information on how sessions are
conducted offer instructors more than a superficial understanding of what takes
place during a conference (Decker 18). Instructors outside of English departments
likely have even less of a chance of understanding the nature of writing center work and would be enlightened if they witnessed consultants actively responding to students, seeing their students’ reactions, and observing the development of their students’ writing and writing behavior as a result (18–19).

In looking back, I find no real negatives in linking our courses. Doing so helped me fulfill the objectives of my course creatively and productively, and I did so by educating myself along the way. At first, I was worried that collaborating might mean extra, time-consuming work. It didn’t. Although my colleague and I needed to synchronize our classes and discuss logistics of the conferences, little other preparation was necessary. I monitored what my students were experiencing during conference sessions and skinned their conference reflections once a session took place. Without a doubt, our conference sessions were a productive use of class time. If anything, in the future I would make postdiscussions of the conferences a much bigger component of my class, thus enhancing my students’ first-year writing experience.

Benefits of Praxis: The Points of View of Both Instructors

Although both of us went into the collaboration thinking it would help students develop consulting and writing abilities, we had not anticipated that linking our courses would lead to the creation of blurred authoritarian roles that ultimately empowered students.

For consultants, the blurring of authority alleviated the discomfort they frequently experience in being, as Teagan Decker notes, not quite a peer and not quite a teacher (22). Marti Singer, Robin Breault, and Jennifer Wing also point to this stress by describing consultants as “middle managers” who “occupy the liminal space of being a student as well as a teaching assistant” (143). Many other scholars also acknowledge that consultants’ middle identity, coupled with the authoritarian relationship that teachers have over consultants, plays “an integral role in writing center effectiveness and student learning” (Singer, Breault, and Wing 141). Susan Georgecink even describes consultants as oftentimes “marionettes asked to perform without betraying that the writing center administration is holding the strings” (175).

Over the past decades writing center directors have attempted to diffuse these complicated power dynamics in various ways. Some programs have worked successfully, “empowering the consultants through programmatic support of various kinds” that have helped elucidate the “complexity of power dynamics at work in the writing consultant position” (Singer, Breault, and Wing 152). In diffusing the authority of the classroom teacher, Singer, Breault, and Wing mention that at the University of Georgia consultants and classroom instructors attend a workshop in which both groups collaborate. Together they refine the course syllabus, assignments, and evaluation rubrics, and together they compose what responsibilities the consultant will be charged with in working with students (152). Similarly, at the University of Washington consultants worked not as teachers but as what Decker calls “facilitators.” Instead of appearing in classrooms as writing authorities, the
facilitators are viewed as practiced responders who show students how to offer writing feedback to each other in peer-group sessions (27).

Perhaps to a lesser extent, composition students also reaped the benefit of having a renegotiated power structure. Going into the collaboration, both of us were concerned that the composition students would have too many teachers and imagine themselves at the bottom of a heavy pedagogical heap. However, our linked courses created a space where consultants and student writers were engaged in a symbiotic relationship. Unlike the goals and objectives inherent in the writing center and in fellows programs, conferences in our collaboration were conducted overtly for the consultant’s benefit, not just the writer’s. The composition students knew that the consultants were in the midst of their training, so the consultants possessed an identity that was as much student as teacher, making them, in a real sense, much like peers of the composition students. Having consultants move into the classroom in this way created what Bonnie S. Sunstein calls a movable, transportable contact zone, one that bridges the liminal space consultants occupy between authority and student (7–23). On some level, the composition students were training consultants to consult, which allowed for a role-reversal that mitigated hierarchy.

As instructors, we also had to negotiate issues of power, not only in the ways we perceived between the consultants and writing students, but also between all the students and us. The consultants sometimes used the first-year writing students’ responses to justify how well they conducted a conference and to question the nondirective consulting philosophy adopted by our center. In a similar way, the first-year composition students oftentimes used the consultants’ comments to justify changes that they made in their papers —this led more than once to their questioning their teacher’s responses to their papers. From a variety of angles, having more authorities furthered discussion in both classes about decision making and control.

Benefits of Praxis: The Point of View of the Students

Not surprisingly, students in both classes noted advances in their learning as a result of pairing the writing center consultant course with the first-year composition course. The budding writing center consultants were always invigorated when preparing for conferences and when debriefing after such conferences took place. When asked on their course evaluations to list the activities that held their attention and most helped them learn the material, nine out of fifteen students—more than half—mentioned the collaborative tutoring sessions. From these students’ points of view, the direct application of what they were learning was a crucial component of the class.

First-year composition students were consistently positive as well. Beyond their near-perfect attendance on the class days when the collaborations took place and their informal verbal feedback about the sessions, their voices were captured on numerous forms that we administered following each tutoring session (see Appendix C for Response Forms Distributed to First-Year Writers). On almost all of these forms, students described the sessions using such terms as “extremely
helpful,” “encouraging,” and “beneficial.” When asked specifically on one form if their tutors helped with an assignment, 75 percent of the students specified “a lot,” while all of the remaining students except one specified “some.” Only one lone student noted “not at all.”

More specifically, students remarked that they received help from consultants on a variety of writing concerns including passive voice, audience, thesis, introduction, showing versus telling, effective wording, research, and informal diction. Because numerous student comments also highlighted that feedback from consultants would be incorporated into later drafts, it seemed clear that many students embraced, at least implicitly, the writing process. Several talked in some depth about the specific changes they would make to improve the next draft of their papers, citing research that they would have to add or structural concerns that they would have to negotiate. Other students, though briefer in their comments, seemed just as cognizant of the drafting process. One student simply said that her consultant showed her “how to write better papers.”

Students’ positive attitude about our collaboration was also evident in their responses to two questions about their future use of writing centers (see Appendix C). The first time we administered the survey, it included the following open-ended question:

Does it [your work with consultants] make you inclined to use the writing center? Why or why not?

Almost all of the first-year composition students responded that they would “maybe” or “definitely” use the writing center in the future. Most wrote that they plan to use the center because it is a “great resource” and mentioned that working with consultants helped them to, in one student’s words, “improve and create better papers.”

The second time we administered the survey we included an even more dichotomous question:

Does working today with a consultant make you inclined to use the writing center? Yes Maybe No

Out of seventeen students completing this form, ten responded “yes,” seven responded “maybe,” and none responded “no”; quite tellingly, 100 percent of the composition students said they would “maybe” or “definitely” use the writing center in the future.

According to responses on both forms, as well as the general tenor of the class, most of the first-year composition students did not finish the class thinking that a writing center was a waste of their time or that the consultants would fail to understand an assignment or the expectations of a professor. These students also understood that the writing center is neither an intimidating place nor a place of remediation. “I want to use the writing center in the future,” one student said, “because of the helpful comments.” Another student wrote that “yes, it [tutoring] has been beneficial . . . and I would be more inclined to use the writing center because I am now aware of the help I would receive.”
Concluding Remarks

Scholars, including Teagan Decker, make arguments that writing centers should join in classroom instruction and posit models where centers are less isolationist, models that encourage diplomatic means to build relationships between centers and classroom teachers. In light of these arguments, we can see how our collaboration could help build such relationships with faculty throughout an institution. Consultant training could be paired with a course in any discipline that requires either multiple writing assignments or a significant writing assignment that engages students in the writing process over a large part of the semester. Such an interdisciplinary partnership could be particularly valuable. The faculty and students in a course other than composition would see that developing writing ability is not limited to English and communication courses and that consultants are able to help strengthen assignments in various disciplines and levels of study. Likewise the director of the center and consultants-in-training would learn more fully how writing is incorporated into different disciplines along with the expectations and conventions of such disciplines. Unlike those scholars engaged in fellows programs, we orchestrated our collaboration so that students work together with different consultants individually or in pairs during classroom time, and, just as importantly, so that consultants are learning from the students as much as helping them learn.

Based on our experience, the educational advantages of melding the writing center course with the first-year composition course reached all participants. The ability to respond to others’ writing was enhanced for the consultants, many of whom go on to careers in education or professional writing. The ability to work with suggestions from knowledgeable peers was strengthened for first-year students (just as it could be for students in other disciplines), many of whom will bring their experience into a myriad of professional and personal situations. The two of us came to know our students better through their engagement in what is usually an out-of-class activity. In Charles Dickens’s words, our partnership “was a far, far, better thing that [we] do, than [we] have ever done” (437), one that we think other instructors could adapt in order to tell a happy tale where they had the great pleasure of working together to achieve ends that were not possible on their own.

APPENDIX A: Writing Center Course Final Exam

Conference Analysis and Reflection

Your exam should be between two to three typed, single-spaced pages. Please number each answer. Your answers to numbers 2 and 3 should comprise the bulk of your writing. When turning in your exam, attach a copy of the draft that the writer brought to you.

1. What was the writer’s name?

2. Tell me the plan you proposed to the writer and justify this plan. What was in the writer’s draft, or what did the writer say, that caused you to devise this plan? For example: Was the writer self-censoring? Did the writer have fluency but no concept? Was the writer able to
write for the audience? What from our discussions and readings might account for your decision to propose this plan?

3. What specific thinking was the writer called upon to do as a result of your working together, and what happened during your conference to provoke that thinking? Be very specific. What questions did you ask? What statements did you make? What did the writer say? What did the writer write during the conference? Etc.

4. As a result of your conference, what do you think the writer learned about writing or herself/himself as a writer?

5. What would you do differently if you could conduct this conference again and why?

APPENDIX B: WRITING CENTER COURSE FINAL EXAM RUBRIC

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<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
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<td>You and the writer began the conference with a clear understanding of the purpose and audience for this assignment.</td>
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<td>Keeping in mind the writer's concerns, and your insights about the writer's needs, you proposed a wise plan.</td>
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<td>You focused on higher-order concerns, or skillfully tried to do so.</td>
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<td>You used skillful means in prompting the writer to maintain responsibility for his/her writing.</td>
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<td>Your analysis of your conference shows insight into yourself as a consultant.</td>
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<td>Your analysis of the conference shows understanding of our readings and class discussion.</td>
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<td>You used specific examples in your analysis that supported your more general statements.</td>
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<td>Your analysis is organized, well stated, and well edited.</td>
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APPENDIX C: RESPONSE FORMS DISTRIBUTED TO FIRST-YEAR WRITERS

Form 1

Your Name _________________________________________
Your Consultant's Name ___________________________________

The consultants and I are grateful for you working with us this semester. We hope to have contributed to your efforts to become a better writer. Letting us work with you enabled consultants to become better at conducting conferences and better at writing as well.

What in particular did you learn about yourself as a writer, or about writing, as a result of today's conference?

What could this consultant do to improve her or his consulting?

What is this consultant doing well when consulting?
Has your work with consultants for first-year writing been beneficial to you? Does it make you inclined to use the Writing Center? Why or why not?

Form 2

Your Name _________________________________________
Your Consultant’s Name ___________________________________
Did your consultant help you write this assignment? A lot Some Not at all
What did you do/write with this consultant?
What did you learn about yourself as a writer or about writing as a result of your conference?
What did you like best and least about this consultant’s methods/manner?
Does working today with a consultant make you inclined to use the Writing Center?
Yes Maybe No

Note

1. Students quoted from their responses to the forms in Appendix C granted their informed consent as mandated by Elon University’s Institutional Review Board.

Works Cited


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