

Writing Associates Program

Since 2007, the Writing Center has offered professors the option of pairing his/her students with a single, dedicated tutor called a "Writing Associate."

A Writing Associate is an experienced peer writing consultant who works with the professor before the semester begins to discuss course and assignment goals and to create a structure by which the WA can conference with students on course assignments well in advance of due dates.

Students in the class are therefore given the opportunity and are expected to engage in substantial drafting and revision through interaction with the WA. Other benefits that arise from the faculty/WA relationship include the fact that the professor can gain insight into how students' actually interpret, draft and respond to assignments out of class and take such insight into account before drafts are due for evaluation.

It is important to stress that Writing Associates are not teaching assistants –that is to say, they are not experts in course content nor is their primary purpose to teach it. Furthermore, Writing Associates are not responsible for the grading of any assignments. Rather, as intelligent and experienced writers with training in the "best practices" of tutoring writing, Writing Associates serve as facilitators (rather than judges) as they help students move from "writerly" drafts (in which they are clarifying their understanding of an assignment and their own ideas) to more "readerly" drafts (in which they are organizing, signposting and revising their thinking and writing for real readers).

Given the complex nature of writing and learning, Writing Associates are no guarantee of "A" level or error-free papers. Nevertheless, the program does create an opportunity for the improvement of student thought and discourse outside the classroom.

Goals and Benefits of the Writing Associates Program:

- To help students improve their thinking and writing by encouraging them to draft early and to engage in more substantial revision work and redrafting before their writing is graded
- To offer professors support in the use/teaching of writing in their classrooms and an opportunity to revisit their writing goals/pedagogy in light of feedback from the WA about their students' perceptions and drafting tendencies/patterns
- To involve both students and WAs more deeply in active learning and the mission of the college

- To offer WAs a more complex context to mentor writing by working with a single professor on one or several assignments. Writing Associates thereby become academic and professional role models for their peers.
- To make the Writing Center a moveable feast: the majority of student visits to the Writing Center are still from freshmen composition courses. The WA program brings the Writing Center outward into other schools, departments and student bodies. It also brings the services we offer more directly to the students rather than waiting for students to take the initiative.
- To help the Writing Center and its Director learn about the expectations, practices, and goals for “good writing” in other disciplines.

To learn more about the Writing Associate program or to request a Writing Associate for a specific course, please contact Melissa Mullins, the Director of the Writing Center, at mmullins@berry.edu or call (706) 290-4595.