

KU Writing Center: Get to know us. DVD Instructor Guide

The *KU Writing Center: Get to Know Us* DVD will introduce your students not only to the Writing Center's services, but also to the ideas that writers need other writers, and that at the KU Writing Center they'll find a welcoming community of writers in which to learn about and practice academic writing.


The activities below offer you some ready ideas for extending the video into conversations about writing with your students. We hope you'll tailor them to your own classroom and students, considering how writing in your discipline and your course might be new to your students. You can use this opportunity to talk with them about your expectations as a reader and disciplinary expert...and most importantly as a writer yourself.

The activities are separated under headings so that you can think about your own goals for your students' writing and choose which area below might best help them focus on those parts of the writing process. We encourage you to return to these activities later in the semester as well and see if any of them might be useful as you introduce a new writing assignment.

If you are interested in learning more about using writing to support student learning in your courses, visit the Instructors section of our website for more ideas and resources. We are also happy to meet with you individually to talk about planning effective writing assignments and effectively responding to student writing in your courses.

Write with Us.

Writing is a process.

Before the video—Have students describe, in detail, the process they went through to write  their last paper, including everything from how they procrastinated to how they planned, organized, and edited it. Other options: have students draw storyboards of their process. Have students write the aspects of their process on note cards.

Then have student get into groups (of 3 or 4) and share:

What similarities do you find among your writing processes?

What differences do you find?

What surprised you about other people's processes?

After the video—

Have them think and talk about the following questions:

- What struck me as important in the video?

- What from the video either suggests that I could revise parts of my process or confirms that what I'm doing is working?
- What strategies do others in the class use that could work for me?

Then have students revisit their process, describing what process they'll follow as they write their next paper. You may even have them look at the next assignment for your particular course, considering how much time they'll need to schedule for reading, researching, thinking and drafting.

Experienced writers: How do they do it?

Before the video—Have students answer the question (on paper or in a discussion): How do experienced writers write? What does their “process” look like in all its detail from beginning to end?

After the video— Have students share what they heard about the writing process in the video. What surprised them?

Now we encourage you to talk about your own writing process with your students. Consider explaining or describing the following to them.

- How do you begin projects?
- What kind of environment do you need to write successfully?
- What brings on and how do you address writer's block?
- How do you assess whether you've been successful or not? What is the point of writing for you, if, as Dan Bernstein describes in the DVD, it is “not to get a 90”?
- How long is your process from start to finish? (Or how long can it be?)
- How do you get feedback?

Writers need other writers.

Before the video—Have students imagine the process their professors/instructors use as they write, describing it in writing. Share, and create lists of common descriptors or images. Where, along the way, do they interact with others in their process?

After the video— Have students talk about what people in the video said about why getting feedback and working with others is useful.

Talk about your own writing process with your students, as well as what other instructors and professors say in “Getting to know us.” Then have get into groups of three or four and create their own “Top 10 Myths about Writing” lists.

Writing successfully.

Before the video—Have students describe in writing their most valuable writing experience, including as many details as they can remember. Encourage them to think of "valuable" in a broader sense than just the grade--perhaps even considering writing they did outside of school. Talk about what made these writing projects valuable for them. Have them consider "Are these 'value-adding' aspects unique to writing?"

After the video—Have students gather into groups of three or four and consider:

- Were there things mentioned in the video that were part of your successful writing experiences?
- What ideas from the video could you adopt to make your writing experiences more successful?

Have each group share their answers. Talk about how the using the KU Writing Center can add value to their learning and writing experiences at KU.