

One-on-one Writing Meetings

7 Key Principles¹

1. Teach, don't fix
2. Don't provide student with specific language they can use (even vocabulary)
3. Resist the urge to write / annotate as much as possible
4. Ask, don't tell
5. Don't usurp student's authority as writer
6. Don't overwhelm students with feedback on technical aspects of their writing: it's better to be useful than to be complete but intimidating
7. Whenever possible, focus on the assignment at hand—use it as an objective, external object

6 Key Practices

1. Sit side by side (not across the table from each other)
2. Set reasonable expectations on what can be achieved in the allotted time
3. Be aware of signs of stress, anxiety
4. Unless you know the student, go through formal introduction
5. Ask student to write, take notes, annotate their own papers
6. Give mini-lessons rather than revising errors (formative not summative focus for feedback; you are preparing the student to do better on the next assignment/draft/etc.)

6 Key Approaches

1. Get students to explain an idea or paragraph “in their own words” without looking at the paper
2. Create maps, charts, outlines using students' words
3. Praise must be constructive, specific, and connected to a part of the paper (ideally, an assessment criterion)
4. Be prepared to “refer” students to other services
5. Have useful resources available
6. Always provide a “take-away” by summarizing your accomplishments at the end of a session

Just in Case

UTM Student Affairs and services: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/student-affairs-services>

UTM Student Affairs: (905) 828-3872

UTM Campus Police: (905) 569-4333

¹ This material was used as part of RGASC Writing TA Training Sessions.