



Writing Center Academic Affairs

Tips on Planning with a Partner

Planning or peer-reviewing with a partner can help you write a better essay. The tutors in the Writing Center are trained to help you with your planning. You may also wish to plan with classmates or friends. If you do, train them to be efficient planners by showing them the procedures below.

General Instructions

- Schedule a meeting of about 15-20 minutes.
- Come to the meeting with a plan, but not one that is "cast in stone."
- Be prepared to make some changes in the plan.
- Tape the session or take notes.

The Writer's Job

The writer must set the agenda for the session by explaining what kind of help is needed. Come to the session prepared to talk. Once in the session, try to accomplish the following:

- Explain the purpose of the piece.
- Convey key points.
- Define the audience.
- Predict the reader's response.
- Think through the writing conventions expected in the field.
- Raise problems.
- Talk over alternatives.

The Partner's Job

The partner, or tutor, should act as more than a prompt by raising real issues. At the same time, the partner's job is to help the writer achieve his/her stated goals, not push the partner's own agenda. As a partner, you can help the writer clarify, plan, and anticipate problems by doing the following:

- Reflect back what the writer has said.
- Ask questions for clarification.
- Listen for possible gaps in the argument.
- Suggest alternatives methods and goals.
- Warn of potential negative responses.

Information taken from Linda Flower's Problem Solving Strategies for Writing. 4th ed. N.Y.: Harcourt, 1993.