Introduction to *Writes of Passage*

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Working as a writing consultant allows me the privilege to help other students with their papers, to read a diverse set of papers that have been written by other students, and to lead grammar groups for students. By doing these things, I have been able to strengthen my own writing and develop a deeper appreciation for the art of writing.

When working with students on their own work, writing consultants encounter a variety of writing styles, read papers for different subject areas, and observe the ways creative writing can be adapted to meet the needs of both the writer and the course. I have seen the ways a student can use grammar and language to portray the emotions or points of their paper more effectively; I have helped students do this in their papers and have explained why it worked. This has made me more aware of the ways I can use language and grammar to strengthen my own work. It has also helped me reflect on the mistakes I make when writing. I feel as though working in a setting like the writing center helped me become more reflective on my writing process and outcome; I am being asked to help proofread other students’ work and would feel hypocritical if I found things in their papers that are present in my own. When I began taking my own suggestions to read out loud and trust my instincts, my writing reaped the benefits.

I have also learned that working with students on papers is an interactive process just like writing a paper. Both require that the writer is engaged with the material, is able to talk about the material, and is flexible with the process. Writing a paper requires writers to interact with their subject, writing about it and engaging with it. Similarly, a
writing consultant is always working directly with the student who is bringing work to the writing center; the consultant is engaging directly with the material and the writer. In this way, I have learned to become a much more active writer; I am more inspired to write when I begin papers. I read my papers out loud as I write and proofread, and I am generally more engaged as I write.