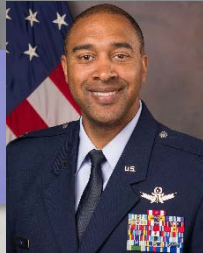


Writing in PME

1st Quarter, 2020

Faculty Spotlight



Colonel Elvert L. Gardner is an Assistant Professor at The Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy. He leads the Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications Industrial Base Industry Study. In that capacity, he is responsible for developing, planning, instructing, and managing course execution.

When asked to discuss his philosophy of teaching writing, Col Gardner explains how writing is, "integral to all aspects of his curriculum." Col Gardner recognizes that writing is not only "essential to articulating findings and viewpoints in a compelling manner," but is critical to "learning concepts and applying critical thinking to those concepts." He also understands the importance of coherence within a document: "I reinforce concepts of writing a strong thesis statement that takes a clear stance on an issue and indicates the key supporting arguments. I also teach students to acknowledge counter-arguments and defend their position as part of their writing." By emphasizing the importance of understanding the principles that connect articulation, critical thinking, and content areas, he believes his students are "postured to write compelling papers that are logical, coherent, and well supported."

Col Gardner seeks specific strategies for not only improving his students' writing and encouraging them to respond critically to complex ideas but also for assessing their writing. His efforts position students at the center of the learning experience, making writing instruction and the teaching of content areas collaborative rather than competitive. Writing is a difficult process, and Col Gardner's patience guiding students through the process is consistent with his appreciation of the cognitive and social complexities of writing. For those reasons, Col Gardner was selected as this quarter's faculty spotlight.

All writers hope to influence their reader. Many students fear their papers will be deemed unworthy of a reader to influence. It is important to consider the relationship of the reader and the writer, especially as it pertains to commenting on and providing feedback to student work. The degree to which a reader is influenced depends on the writer's ability to use the tools of language to evoke the intended concepts in the reader.

For many reasons, it is common that writers fail to achieve a high level of influence in the first draft of a writing project. As faculty Lindemann describes, in her text "A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers," as a process of reading to assume what Erika message. Before commenting, student learning is better served by reading to appreciate the gap between a writer's intention and the writer's execution. From an understanding of that gap and hypothesizing why that gap appeared, the faculty member is positioned to theorize about the decisions the writer made. The faculty reader with a clear theory explaining why and how the text lacks influence is better positioned to provide feedback. Such diagnostic and explanatory feedback is more likely to positively influence student thought processes and revisions that ultimately lead to a more influential text.

Tip for Teaching Writing

Presented by the:

Writing Center Consortium

for Graduate-level PME

