

# BACK TO THE TUTORS

## Southeastern Writing Centers Association Conference Mississippi-Alabama Mini-Regional

Hosted by the Mississippi College Department of English  
and  
the Mississippi Writing Centers Association

Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, and Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>

Mississippi College  
Clinton, Mississippi



Mississippi  
College

A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

# “BACK TO THE TUTORS”

2010 SWCA Mini-Regionals

The SWCA Florida Statewide Conference is asking this year’s participants to think about our theme and get “back to the tutor.”

Six years ago, the classic 1985 film *Back to the Future*, which won 13 awards and was nominated for an additional 23, was released on DVD with a new retrospective documentary about its making, gaining it new audiences and media attention. In the film, Marty McFly (played by Michael J. Fox), a high school senior, time-travels back to 1955 to his parents’ senior year to save the future for himself and his siblings, and in the end makes his parents’ lives better too.

Significantly, Marty serves as a peer tutor to his father, guiding him to become more confident to act and think for himself. Most notably, by the film’s end, we see the tangible results of Marty’s peer tutoring: George grows up to be a published writer of science fiction novels.

Coincidentally, the year the film hit theaters fell in the middle of a decade that gave rise to a wave of writing center publications, specifically texts about peer tutoring. As Harvey Kail notes in his editor’s remarks for the Fall 2008 special issue of *The Writing Center Journal*, dedicated to Kenneth Bruffee and the Brooklyn Project, “Bruffee publishes in the mid-1980s a series of essays that famously theorize peer tutoring as a paradigm of social constructionist pedagogy”(3). Moreover, Kail’s assertion about the essays is proved by the example of Marty and George from 1985’s *Back to the Future*: “Together and separately, they make a compelling argument for the value of organizing students to take each other seriously as writers and readers” (3).

As the end-note speaker at the joint IWCA/NCPTW conference in October 2008, Harvey Kail spoke of how far our profession has drifted from talking about what tutors do in tutorials and what they achieve and learn from being tutors. He issued a call to explore and recognize the contributions of our tutors.

The SWCA saw this year as the ideal one to return our focus to our tutors’ voices and experiences, and to look ahead to how their voices create our futures.

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12<sup>th</sup>

**2:00-6:00pm**

**Jennings Hall, 3rd Floor**  
Conference Registration

**2:30-2:50pm**

**Jennings Hall, Room 305**  
Welcome and Introduction to the Conference

Welcome: **Dean Gary Mayfield**, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mississippi College  
Conference Agenda: **Steve Price**, Director, Mississippi College Writing Center, and **Kerri Jordan**, Director, Mississippi College Writing Program

**3:00-4:15pm**

**Jennings Hall, Room 305**

**Session 1**

**Responding to Institutional Needs Through Tutor-led Initiatives at Mississippi College**

Moderator: **Steve Price**, Mississippi College

Presenters:

- **Joseph Kuykendall** and **Ashley Krason**, “A Tutoring Partnership for an English Language Learners Introductory Writing Course”
- **Elizabeth Anne Oates** and **Lingshan Song**, “Designing a Writing Partners Initiative for Mississippi College’s Intensive English Program”
- **Michael Lofton**, “Tutoring Perspectives and Initiatives at the Mississippi College School of Law’s Legal Writing Center”

Writing Center tutors have a unique perspective from which to view and respond to specific needs of students at their institution. Proposing, designing, and conducting Writing Center outreach initiatives with other campus programs emphasizes tutors’ professional abilities and potential impact on their campus. This panel will discuss several Mississippi College Writing Center initiatives that have largely stemmed from and remained in the hands of tutors willing and able to take the lead.

**4:30-5:45pm**

**Jennings Hall, Room 307**

**Session 2A**

**Intersections in Tutoring and Teaching**

Moderator: **Michael Lofton**, Mississippi College

Presenters:

- **Stephen Coleman**, Mississippi College
- **Bethany Gatewood**, Forest High School
- **Timothy Krason**, Hinds Community College

This panel, made up of former Writing Center tutors who now work as high school and college-level English instructors, will explore the ways in which their tutoring and teaching experiences reciprocally inform one another. The session will emphasize tutoring strategies related to student needs that emerge in the classroom.

**4:30-5:45pm**

**Jennings Hall, Room 305**

**Session 2B**

**SWCA and MS WCA Conference Planning Session / Round Table Discussion**

Potential SWCA 2011 conference host **Luke Niiler**, of the University of Alabama, and potential MS WCA conference host Melanie Barthelme, of the University of Southern Mississippi, invite writing center directors and other interested attendees to join in a preliminary conference planning discussion. A key point of emphasis will involve how to negotiate writing center tutors’ and directors’ professional development needs given the current budget climate and institutional restrictions on travel.

**6:15-8:00pm**

**Dinner and Keynote Address**

**Alumni Hall, 3rd Floor**

Welcome and Administrative Reflections: **Jonathan Randle**, Interim Chair, Mississippi College Department of English  
Prayer: **Susan Lassiter**, Assistant Professor, Mississippi College Department of English  
Introduction of Keynote Speaker: **Steve Price**, Director, Mississippi College Writing Center

**Keynote Address: Michele Eodice, University of Oklahoma**  
**“Beginning Your Writing Center Research Project”**

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13th

### 8:15-11:30am

Registration

Jennings Hall, 3rd Floor

### 8:15-9:00am

Coffee and Pastries

Jennings Hall, Room 306

### 9:00-10:15am

Jennings Hall, Room 305

### SESSION 3

#### Interactive Workshop:

**The 5 C's of Good Tutoring: Conversation, Context, Care, Craft, and Confidence**

Moderator: **Sarah Sneed**, Mississippi State University

Workshop Facilitator: **Luke Niller**, University of Alabama

Meeting the needs and expectations of clientele from across the disciplines tests our ability to patiently adapt to new contingencies; to remain flexible, yet firm; and, sometimes, to assume roles with which we are uncomfortable, even unfamiliar. I suggest that despite these ever-shifting, often exhausting demands, it is possible to uphold the identity and sustain the integrity of the Writing Center: to retain a unifying sense of purpose and vision that goes far beyond “HOC’s before LOC’s” or “We’re not a proofreading service.”

This interactive workshop, then, focuses on five key components of tutoring across the disciplines, based on tutor training modules used at the University of Alabama. Through discussions, role playing, and question and answer time, workshop participants will learn the five ‘C’s’ of good tutoring: creating and sustaining conversation; determining context; practicing client care; attending to writing craft; and developing both tutor and client confidence. These five C’s, I suggest, can help Writing Centers maintain their integrity (and sanity) despite the ever-changing and continuously challenging contingencies of our daily work.

### 10:30-11:45am

Jennings Hall, Room 305

#### SESSION 4A

Minding Our Business: The Tutor at the Heart of the Center

Moderator: **Stephen Coleman**, Mississippi College

Presenters:

- **Melanie Barthelme** and **Erica Brown**, University of Southern Mississippi, “Tutor Training: An Opportunity to Do More, Better”
  - **Elizabeth Wagner**, University of Southern Mississippi, “Incorporating the Concept of Mindfulness into Tutor Training and Practice”
- In this panel, the Director, Assistant Director, and Administrative Tutor from the University of Southern Mississippi’s Writing Center will explore how their philosophy and methods for tutor training have evolved and changed to more actively involve the tutors. An emerging interest among the group involves the concept of “mindfulness”—a moment-to-moment nonjudgmental awareness—in Writing Center tutoring and tutor training.

### 10:30-11:45am

Jennings Hall, Room 307

#### SESSION 4B

Interactive Workshop: Translating Tutor Experience onto Your Professional Resume

Moderator: **Tennyson O’Donnell**, Mississippi State University

Workshop Facilitator: **Maegan Mitchell**, Crescent Consulting, LLC

Writing Center tutors engage in a variety of interpersonal and problem-solving activities that prepare them for diverse workplace opportunities later on. This interactive session will help tutors examine their writing center experiences and the connections between the writing center and the “real world.” Participants will then strategize ways to present their experiences and skills effectively on resumes and in interviews.

### 12:00-1:00pm

Lunch and Tutor Experiences Panel

Anderson Hall, President’s Board Room, 2nd Floor

Moderators: **Kerri Jordan** and **Steve Price**, Mississippi College

Presenters:

- **Ava Barrett**, **Kirk Cochran**, **Marcus Haynes** and **Marcella Lewis**, Alcorn State University
- **Michael Mohr**, Millsaps College
- **Allison Angle**, **Brittany Brooks**, **Joseph Hemleben**, **Christopher Routh**, and **Anna Salvo**, Mississippi College
- **Elizabeth Wagner**, University of Southern Mississippi

Join us for lunch as we go “back to the tutors.” During our noon session, tutors from a variety of universities will share stories related to writing center experiences that have been particularly significant to them. Listen carefully to the tutors’ tales of successes, challenges, reflections, and questions: in the workshop session that follows, we will return to these stories and re-examine them more closely as potential inspiration for writing center research.

### 1:00-3:00pm

Interactive Workshop: Turning Tutor Experiences into Research Studies

Anderson Hall, President’s Board Room, 2nd Floor

Workshop Facilitators:

- **Michele Eodice**, University of Oklahoma
- **Quinn White**, Montevallo University
- **Kerri Jordan**, Mississippi College
- **Steve Price**, Mississippi College

During this workshop, participants will explore ways to move from tutors’ stories about their writing center experiences to substantial research projects for future conference presentations. First working with Quinn White’s tutor story, “The Tao of the Pencil: Auspicious Insight in the Writing Center,” and then practicing with other stories shared during the previous tutor panel, participants will explore how to (A) craft good research questions to help us move from anecdotal experiences to research with broader implications, (B) determine appropriate methods for conducting the research project, and (C) write-up the research plan into a solid proposal for a conference presentation.

We hope that participants will leave the conference with good ideas and strategies for shaping future research projects—and that they will then pursue those projects for presentation at conferences such as IWCA and SWCA and/or for publication in the *Writing Lab Newsletter*, *Writing Center Journal*, or *Southern Discourse*.

## Michele Eodice Keynote Presenter

Michele Eodice is the Director of the Writing Center and Writing Across the Curriculum at the University of Oklahoma.

In 2001, with Kami Day, Michele wrote (First Person)2 : A Study of Co-Authoring in the Academy (Utah State University Press). And in 2007, with four other writing center directors, she wrote The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice (Utah State University Press).

Michele is the immediate-past president of the International Writing Centers Association, an NCTE affiliate with over 700 members. Also, she was a leader and co-chair of the International Writing Centers Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors and Professionals for three years, and will host her fourth Summer Institute this July.

Michele is the recipient of the 2006 National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing's Ron Maxwell Award for Distinguished Leadership in Promoting the Collaborative Learning Practices of Peer Tutors in Writing.

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Dear Peer Writing Tutors and Writing Fellows,

Are you thinking about proposing a session for the International Writing Centers Association/ National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing Conference in Baltimore next November? Go for it!

If you haven't thought about it yet, I hope you will now.

You have probably already taken a big step if you recognize that something quite extraordinary happens when students take each other seriously as writers and readers. Everyone learns as a result—learns about language, learns about meaning, learns about her or his own self. And as a peer writing tutor, you have unique insights into writing in the academy that only you have access to. So I hope you decide to take the challenge, propose a session, and join with hundreds of other writing center peer tutors, writing program fellows, and writing center professionals in doing what we do best: learn from each other.

**The deadline for proposals is March 1, 2010.**

You can find everything you need to know about the special “joined” conference as well as the call for proposals at <http://www.mawcaonline.org/iwca>. In keeping with the conference location in Baltimore, Maryland, the theme of this year's gathering is “Safe Harbors.” I want to assure you that the NCPTW review process will reflect that theme, and your proposal will be treated with respectful attention. Although we might not be able to accept every proposal, submitted, we will reach out to you, in the same spirit of collaboration as you engage in with the writers you work with, to help you develop and refine your proposal, as you become acquainted with a new writing genre: the conference proposal. There are a variety of formats around which to shape a conference presentation. The call for proposals can help you begin. Let your imagination and your experience be your guides, and set sail today!

See you in Baltimore.

Harvey Kail  
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# Southern Discourse

Publication of the Southeastern Writing Center Association

## Submit your work to Southern Discourse

**Southern Discourse** always needs writers! Whether you are new to publishing your work or a veteran, please consider submitting to this lively, widely read journal. We publish work ranging in length from a short poem to 2000 words.

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Email Christine Cozzens to discuss article ideas including future stories you might want to cover for us, or submit a completed manuscript via email attachment in Microsoft Word. The deadlines are September 15, January 15, and April 15.

To prepare a manuscript for submission, please follow these steps. 1) Use Calisto MT font, 12 pt. 2) Use one space between sentences. 3) Do not indent the beginning of a paragraph. 4) Single space the text and skip one line between paragraphs. 5) Follow MLA guidelines for citing sources. 6) The first time you use an abbreviation such as SWCA, use the complete name followed by the abbreviation in parentheses, e.g. Southeastern Writing Center Association (SWCA); after that you may use the abbreviation.

Send a selection of photos. We prefer action or scene shots to head shots. Photographs must have a resolution of 200-300 dpi; We prefer JPEG format. Please include the name of the photographer or source.

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