MSWCA
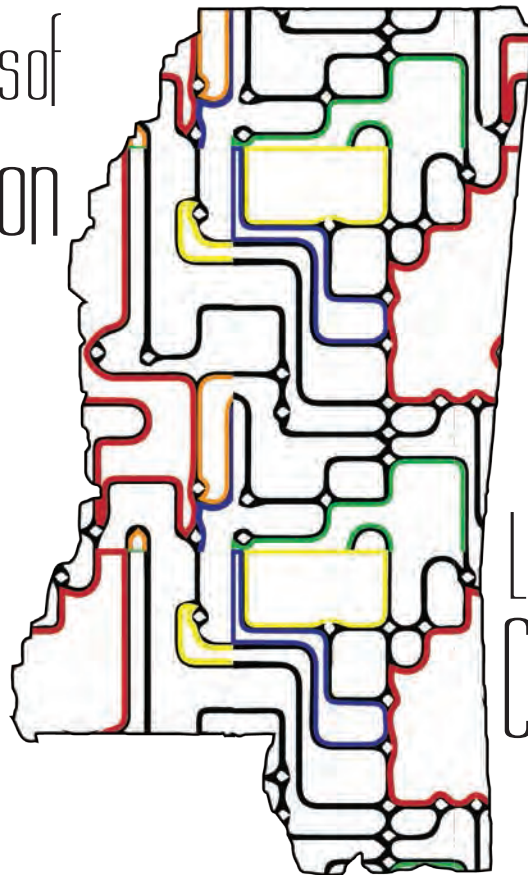
Lines of
Connection

Lines of
Communication

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
JANUARY 29 - 30, 2015

WIFI ACCESS FOR MSWCA

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

5:00   **Registration, Sign-In**
(Lamar Hall, 3rd Floor Lobby)

5:30-7:00   **Poster Session**
(Lamar Hall, The Writing Center)
The poster session is a chance to meet, greet, and mingle. Tutors and administrators will present posters that showcase current writing center projects from across the state. Refreshments will be served.

7:00-8:00   **Vershawn Young Speaks**
(Lamar Hall, 327)
Dr. Vay's talk on Thursday is open to the public. This talk will provide an introduction to his scholarship and an overview of the theory behind code-meshing.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

7:30-8:15   **Registration, Sign-In and Breakfast**
(Lamar Hall, The Writing Center)

8:30-8:35   **Welcome and Introduction**
Dr. Alice Myatt (Yerby)

8:35-8:45   **Welcoming Address**
Dr. Lynne Murchison, Assistant Provost for Regional Education (Yerby)

9:00-10:00   **Session A**

10:00-10:15   **Break**

10:15-11:15   **Session B**

11:15-11:30   **Break**

11:30-12:15   **Keynote Address**
Dr. Vershawn Ashanti Young
University of Waterloo
Yerby Auditorium

12:15-1:15   **Lunch**
(Lamar Hall, The Writing Center)

1:30-2:45   **Session C**

2:45-3:00   **Break**

3:00-3:45   **Session D**

4:00-5:00   **Closing Events**

SESSION A

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015
9:00-10:00 AM

PANEL A.1

We're not in Kansas anymore! Overcoming the Silo Effect of Multi-Campus Writing Centers

PANEL A.2

ELL Preparedness in Tutor Training

PANEL A.1
(YERBY)

We're Not in Kansas Anymore! Overcoming the Silo Effect of Multi-Campus Writing Centers

Most writing center folk are familiar with the metaphors and tropes often associated with both the physical and academic spaces of writing centers. In 1998's "Erika and the Fish Lamps: Writing and Reading the Local Scene," Connolly et al. used two tropes: "borderland space" and "subculture" (20), noting that these terms were particularly apt for "reflections on writing center place and identity" (20). The terms also emphasize the sense of isolation that may develop when writing centers are physically distant (or distinct) from the main campus. As presenters of this proposed panel, all of whom are situated at a university that has multiple writing centers and multiple writing center directors, we ask not, "Can we overcome the silo effect of being a unit in a multi-center, multi-campus environment," but "How do we avoid becoming a silo among multi-campus writing centers?" We also engage with the question asked by Connolly et al.: "How does a center manage its borderland location without becoming either an extension of the dominant culture or entirely disconnected from it?"

In our panel, we draw on the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, where viewers were introduced to the barren, drab landscape of a Kansas farm, complete with monochromatic grey tones that are characteristic of most films of that time. When Dorothy Gale is swept up and away from a Kansas farm, she lands in a colorful world full of vivid and amazing characters, and the change is such a contrast that Dorothy exclaims to her faithful dog, Toto: "We're not in Kansas anymore!"

In much the same way as Dorothy, writing

PRESENTERS: ALICE JOHNSTON MYATT, JEANINE RAUCH, RACHEL JOHNSON, CLAIRE MISCHKER, BRAD CAMPBELL, AND ANDREW DAVIS
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

center administrators and consultants at the University of Mississippi have been part of sweeping changes during the last four years. 2011 saw the creation of actual writing centers on the University's satellite campuses in Southaven and Tupelo; 2012 brought online writing center consultations to all University students, further expanding the reach of writing center services to distance-learners; 2013 enjoyed the establishment of a writing center for graduate students; and 2014 welcomed the Oxford campus writing center to a spacious new home in Lamar Hall. Some of these changes were, as Dorothy's tornado was, tempestuous, and they had the potential for causing isolation rather than community. However, drawing on collaborative resources, the writing center administrators have discovered that it is possible to overcome the silo effect and forge a strong community of practice (Wenger, 2006). This is the topic and theme of their proposed presentation for 2015's MSWCA/TutorCon.

Presenter 1 has been a part of all of the changes that began in 2010 with the implementation of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan "Write Here, Write Now," and she provides the context for the remaining panel. Presenter 2 discusses her work in beginning the writing center on the Southaven campus where she continues to direct the center, and Presenter 3 talks about the Tupelo writing center and how it has managed to maintain its own identify yet remain a strong part of the overall University writing center community. Presenter 4 talks about the move to implement a graduate writing center, and Presenter 5 shares the story of the move from one physical space to a new space that was specifically for collaboration and writing center work. Presenter 6 discusses how virtual spaces contribute to and challenge the University's writing centers. Each presenter also shares lessons learned from their experiences that will give attendees specific suggestions and strategies to use in their home locations.

PANEL A.2
(WRITING CENTER)
ELL Preparedness in Tutor Training

The Mississippi College (MC) Writing Center has 40% of all sessions with ELL students, so most MC tutors will spend 40% of their tutorials working with students who are seeking language acquisition in addition to writing assistance. These local figures led the researchers to consider how tutor training could better prepare tutors to work in an ELL heavy writing center.

To generate locally relevant data, the researchers polled MC WC tutors in three separate layers: general reflections on tutor training,

specific reflections on ELL experiences within the WC, and specific reflections on how tutor training might be modified to better prepare for working with ELL writers. Anticipating polite responses when addressing such concerns with the tutor training instructor and the center's assistant director, the surveys were conducted by a peer tutor who served as a co-researcher.

Using the survey results as a guide, a select pool of tutors were invited to participate in focus groups where the tutors elaborated on their responses with a

fellow peer tutor concerning improving ELL preparedness in tutor training. These interviews were then used to propose revisions to the tutor training course's curriculum, allowing for revisions that were derived from the needs of the tutors working within the MC WC.

The surveys and interviews provided local data, allowing for a local-data driven response to a need in MC's tutor training. Combining this with relevant scholarship by figures such as: Shanti Bruce, Jennifer Gray, James McDonald, Ben Rafoth, Leigh Ryan, and Lisa

PRESENTERS: DANIEL WHITE, LINGSHAN SONG, AND HANNAH FIELDS
MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

Zimmerelli, the researchers were able to propose curriculum revisions that incorporated data sensitive to the local context while remaining conscious of relevant scholarship.

The data collected and shared in the presentation is meant to augment tutor training at MC, better preparing new tutors to join the WC. Knowing some attendees' centers will share similar characteristics, some will be able to similarly incorporate our revisions to tutor training into their own courses since we will provide access to the unrevised and revised models for tutor training.

More importantly, the session will also provide MSWCA attendees with our methodology for collecting similar local-context data from their own centers. This will enable interested parties to form similar projects that explore the needs of their local communities.

Using original and secondary research to improve tutor training program options and approaches to tutoring ELL writers, this project addresses ELL Writers, International Students, and Tutor Training Programs, while also highlighting ways that centers within the MSWCA can share data and practices to improve the work we do.

This project received IRB approval.

SESSION B

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015
10:15-11:15 AM

PANEL B.1
Why Writing Matters

PANEL B.2
Personality Assessment in Tutor Training

WORKSHOP B.3
Visible, Viable, and Vital: Maximizing the Growth Opportunity of University Assessment

PANEL B.1
(YERBY)
Why Writing Matters

This panel consists of three faculty/activity directors, a writing center coordinator, and three involved students at Alcorn State University. We wish to share the unique collaboration between the Alcorn Writing Center and university-wide efforts concerned both with writing and with student well-being. In particular, our panel will discuss how the Alcorn Writing Center is a focal-point for writing—as part of Alcorn State University's Quality Enhancement Program: Writing Matters, a federally funded writing-in the-disciplines initiative—and how the Center is a hub for mental health—through teaming up with the efforts of Dr. Martha Ravola, assistant professor of social work who also serves as a QEP instructor. Dr. Ravola's primary research and grant writing has focused on helping students cope with academic and personal stress, promoting mental health and raising awareness of various mental health issues Alcorn State University.

Regarding the QEP: Writing Matters, we will discuss ways the Alcorn Writing Center has variously supported this important effort to inaugurate writing across the curriculum at ASU. Specifically, we will talk about how the Center director, Dr. Murray Shugars, assisted the QEP director, Dr. Cynthia Scurria, in training faculty to teach writing intensive courses, and about how the Writing Center served as a key support for those courses.

Regarding the efforts to bring mental health awareness to campus, we will discuss the collaboration between the Writing Center and several initiatives

PRESENTERS: MURRAY SHUGARS AND ADMINISTRATORS AND STUDENTS ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY

overseen by Dr. Ravola. These programs include ASU-SPARK (funded by SAMHSA) and "Journey of Hope" (JOH), funded by Morehouse School of Medicine through a sub-award with SAMHSA, and the ASU chapter of Active Minds, a student-run organization striving focused on mental health awareness. We will discuss how Writing Center staff and consultants have received training to recognize students who may be suffering from stress—and to guide those students toward professional help on campus. Moreover, we want to show how such training impacts writing consultations.

We believe that our panel is ideally suited to this year's MSWCA theme: "Lines of Connection, Lines of Communication," for the Alcorn Writing Center has reached across the campus community to support writing and mental health.

PANEL B.2
(WRITING CENTER)
Personality Assessment in Tutor Training

In a panel presentation, a colleague and I would like to discuss a paper that I had written, highlighting that every student has a different process of writing and a particular writing style. More importantly, there is a different personality that goes along with that writing process and writing style's differ from person to person. Writing types range from heavy planners, heavy revisers, sequential composers, and procrastinators. Personality types differ as well, meaning that none of these types of writers possess the same personality, which can affect the thought process and writing style.

The Writing 301 class offered by the University of Mississippi for tutor training focuses on observing the paper more than the student, which can be problematic at times. The class walks the tutor through life in the Writing Center but somewhat disregards the attitudes and implications behind the actions of the student. The life of a student is complex and deeper understanding of the student is crucial to effective tutoring. Most tutors omit subtle body language cues from the student that could alter the way in which the session progresses. The training offered by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) could be centered more on the psychological approach to tutoring, while the class itself remained true to introducing a student to the writing center environment. As it stands now, CRLA training is a reiteration of Writing 301 and provides very little new information to the novice tutor. With each course

PRESENTERS: KERI MAHER AND JAMIE JONES
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

having a distinct emphasis, there would be less overlap and more education for the entering tutors. New tutors are often unsure of their tutoring abilities and these classes are designed to ease them into the writing center environment, while also giving them basic principles to adequately assist their clients. This method would not only allow for multiple ways to train tutors but also change the way in which tutors observe clients and the writing process.

As mentioned in my paper, I believe that the ranging fundamentals of a students' writing process and style can actually help to forge a better learning environment for all college students and tutors alike. Essentially, what I am proposing is for tutors to go through an additional set of training by taking a psychological-behavioral-type course provided by the Writing Center to train tutors to be able to adapt to these different personality types. With the proper training, tutors will be able to conduct an effective tutoring session. The ability to read body language to interpret a student's personality type using a psychological approach can benefit in the ways of understanding where a student is struggling during the thinking and writing process. The teaching-like approach, which is currently being used, only focuses on locating punctuation and grammatical errors, with occasional glance into the higher order concerns of the student. By training tutors through an additional behavioral course, not only will tutors be more equipped to handle a student's personality, but the tutor will also be able to learn additional techniques as a means of valuable tutoring.

WORKSHOP B.3
(YERBY BREAKOUT ROOM)
Visible, Viable, and Vital: Maximizing the Growth Opportunity of University Assessment

Assessment is often seen as a necessary evil, and at times, just downright obstructive and disruptive. However, when effectively implemented and managed, assessment can help writing centers become and stay visible to faculty, students, and administrators; it situates them as viable partners in academic enterprise. The introduction to this workshop also argues that university assessment plans are vital to writing center work in ways that surpass bean-counting and quantitative data.

In this workshop, using as a foundation Ellen Schendel's and William Macauley's recent *Building Writing Center Assessments That Matter*, I draw on my experience with university and writing center assessment to identify the benefits of being part of such activities; I also examine the challenges and concerns being involved in this type of assessment can engender, grounding the conversation in understanding the different types of assessment, the difference between outcome statements and methods used to measure such outcomes, and how to combine outcomes and methods with criteria for excellence.

As this is a workshop, attendees will be invited to develop some of their own assessment outcomes, methods, and criteria, and then share them with the group.

FACILITATOR: ALICE MYATT
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
DR. VERSHAWN YOUNG, UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

11:30 - 12:15
YERBY AUDITORIUM

SESSION C

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015
1:30-2:45 PM

PANEL C.1

Searching for Evidence of Our Effectiveness: A Discourse Analysis of Post-Tutorial Writers' Language

PANEL C.2

Individual Papers

PANEL C.1
(YERBY)

Searching for Evidence of Our Effectiveness: A Discourse Analysis of Post-Tutorial Writers' Language

The push for accountability in writing centers and thus for data-supported rather than anecdotal evidence of effectiveness compels practitioners to engage in research that is replicable, aggregable, and data-driven (RAD; Babcock & Thonus, 2012). Studies providing models for RAD research focus, for example, on the analysis of one-to-one discourse in writing center conferences (Mackiewizc & Thomson, 2015), on the correlation between the frequency of visits to the writing center and student satisfaction (Carino & Enders, 2001), and on the effect of grades on student perception of satisfaction with their writing center experience (Morrison & Nadeau, 2003). Although helpful in looking at various kinds of effectiveness, these approaches do not help us understand writing center effectiveness as we define it.

Even before Muriel Harris's Teaching One-to-One (1986), writing center practice has relied on one-to-one conversations. In these conversations, our goal as a center is to improve writers and their process. How might we know if we are achieving our goal? Stephen North (1984) argues that "tutors … must measure their success … in terms of changes in the writer" (p. 439). To determine whether or not our practice is effective then, we must identify a method and a tool that will help us discover if our conversations with writers "change" them into more experienced, or better, writers.

According to Linda Flower and John Hayes (1980) and others, experienced writers have a greater awareness of their writing process and the

**PRESENTERS: KATHI R. GRIFFIN, DAOYING LIU, AND TATIANA GLUSHKO
JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY**

rhetorical problems they are trying to solve. We would like to know if writers who come to the center regularly change the way they talk about their writing. Thus we analyzed the language students used on the reflection form they completed after each tutorial session. On the form, we asked (a) what students came to work on, (b) how the tutor helped them, (c) what they will work on after the session, and (d) how they will proceed. We then turned our attention to the forms completed by the 14 students who visited the center three or more times.

From February to July 2014, we collected 354 forms. First, the director, graduate assistant, and coordinator each reviewed student responses to identify patterns in how students describe their writing. Each of us focused on different elements of the writing process and different rhetorical problems. One member of our panel sought evidence of students' growing awareness of their writing process in parts of speech (e.g., nouns and verbs) and in areas of focus (i.e., correctness and organization). Another member sought indications that the awareness of audience and genre had increased. For example, he noted any reference to an intended audience (i.e., professor), and he noted how writers described the assignment (i.e., using a single word like paper or essay) or whether they indicated a specific genre (e.g., psychology paper or annotated bibliography). The third member of our panel focused on indications of students' awareness of themselves as writers or of a purpose. This growing awareness might be evident, for example, in talk about insights students gained during the session instead of merely describing the actions of the tutor.

As we share our experience and our findings, we hope to engage with our audience in a conversation about what constitutes effective research in the writing center, and how we might revise our method and our response form to improve our data collection – and hopefully our effectiveness.

PANEL C.2
(WRITING CENTER)
Individual Papers

Nathaniel Stickman, Mississippi College

Developing Online Tutor Training

This presentation will explain the development of online tutoring training at the Mississippi College Writing Center, and from this will consider ways of approaching online tutoring training in different writing center community contexts. First, this will examine our center's processes and its developing awareness of local discourse over the course of implementing the training. Through this process, online tutoring began to establish itself in our community, and the presentation will thus consider the effectiveness of the implementation and why it has worked in our contexts. The presentation will then use these considerations in order to elaborate the kinds the differences in approach other community discourses necessitate for implementing the training. Ultimately, this presentation will seek not to prescribe any one methodology for the implementation of an online tutoring program or its training, but will seek to revise the line of approach to one conscientious of the needs of community discourses.

Hayley Cheatham, The University of Mississippi

Building a Bridge

The jump from a student's senior year of high school to the first year of college is less of a jump and more of a flying leap of faith. A student's world changes completely; the social interactions, new living space, and overwhelming

**PRESENTERS: NATHANIEL STICKMAN - MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE
HAYLEY CHEATHAM - THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**

course load can all lead ultimately to the growth or failure of a student. High school is supposed to prepare a student for what he or she will face in college. However, first year students who come to the Writing Center to seek out the help of a tutor are sometimes shocked or surprised by what the tutor has to say. The high school classes they once excelled in did not adequately prepare them for college level academic writing.

Instead of waiting for students to come to the University and have them realize that they are unprepared for what their classes ask of them, I believe that the Writing Center can make a pathway connecting high school writing to collegiate writing. By creating a program where tutors from the Writing Center would enter into the local high schools and offer writing workshops on a weekly basis, the Writing center would be able to make a lasting impact on students before they even set foot on a college campus as a freshman. The University of Mississippi stands to not only equip its students with knowledge for their own

benefit but to send out those students into the community to share their wealth of knowledge. By allowing high school students to learn what will be expected from them from college aged students, this mentoring styled program could directly open the lines of communication between high school classrooms and the University's Writing Center.

SESSION D

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015
3:00-3:45 PM

WORKSHOP D.1
Standardizing Tutor
Training

WORKSHOP D.2
Reforming a Thesis
from a Completed
Paper

WORKSHOP D.3
Preparing Tutors to
Work with Multimodal
Compositions

WORKSHOP D.1
(YERBY)
Standardizing Tutor Training

We dedicate ourselves to training tutors, helping them to become capable professionals that carry out the good work of centers across the state. From semester long, credit earning courses to bi-weekly staff meetings, our methods vary, but we aim for capable and dedicated tutors. But, how do we define these terms? Are the tutors at one institution prepared to work at another? How do we communicate the value of this training and experience beyond our individual campuses?

On occasion, our tutors have need of moving across the state, transferring or pursuing graduate studies at a different institution, and all of our tutors will one day compose resumes or CVs and have to explain how the tutor training course was more than just a class and their work in the center was more than just a student job or assistantship.

While nationwide tutor certificate programs do exist, their one-size-fits-all approach leaves little room for the individualized and personal training we imagine is provided at all our institutions. This workshop will explore the value of developing an in-state certification program or other means of communicating our tutor training methods across campuses and after graduation. We'd be interested in hearing about the various methods for tutor training provided across the state while also hoping to hear from the MSWCA membership concerning their interest in a statewide certification system or other means of acknowledging the quality tutors in our centers.

The presenters hope this workshop will function as a round-table discussion where they serve as

FACILITATORS: DANIEL WHITE AND STEVE PRICE –MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE BRAD CAMPBELL –THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

facilitators equally engaging
with the attendees.

WORKSHOP D.2
(YERBY BREAKOUT ROOM)
Reforming a Thesis from a Completed Paper

I'm often asked by friends and associates what I do at the Writing Center. I find that to be a very interesting question that cannot be answered in a simple way. Sure, as a tutor, I work with students in multiple ways: grammatically, form, flow, brainstorming, formatting, citation, and other areas, but I find that what I do most is assisting a student in forming a solid thesis from the paper that they have presented.

A large amount of students come in with a paper that is written and mostly complete. The problem is that they do not have a clear thesis, or the one they have presented does not match the paper they have written. I find that if I spend time developing a thesis from the text, the student does not need to write another paper, but rather alter the thesis to fit the argument.

I would like to conduct a workshop that addresses the concepts and methods that it takes to evaluate the effectiveness of a paper and if adjusting the thesis to fit the argument is a better option than suggesting that the student change the paper. Three tutors would be involved and would discuss the methods they use in this process. Questions from the audience would also be addressed in hopes that a conversation would be beneficial to tutors that will most likely experience this issue. By seeing how different tutors address this process and encouraging audience participation, we can discuss methods that have worked and those that have not.

With the internet having so much research material available, student grab sources that do not necessarily fit the original idea of the paper. Inexperienced

FACILITATOR: BRIAN POWERS
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

writers might not be able to recognize this and cannot see why the paper is not going to be graded highly. As tutors, we should let the student own their work. The method of forming a thesis that fits what the student has written allows them to own the work while discovering how to create an argument that does not require them to rewrite the paper.

This topic represents many of the themes suggested on the call for proposals, e.g. tutoring across the curriculum, tutor training, and high school/college writing transitions.

WORKSHOP D.3
(YERBY AUDITORIUM)
Preparing Tutors to Work with Multimodal Compositions

At last year's TutorCon, we shared a presentation about multimodal composition as a sort of call to action for more recognition and use of multimodal composing practices in writing centers. As students are asked to use more technology in their writing and class assignments, writing centers need to adapt to meet these needs. Here at UM for instance, all classes offered by the Department for Writing and Rhetoric require a multimodal component. In addition, the world of writing and publication is becoming increasingly more web-based and multimedia oriented. In our previous presentation, we shared multiple platforms for creating multimodal compositions and demonstrated how one platform (Pixton) in particular worked.

While working with students on multimodal compositions can be really exciting and fun, it also presents its own challenges. For instance, students and tutors alike often struggle with learning the nuances of different technologies, understanding the goals/ requirements of assignments, and translating from one mode/medium to another. We believe that, in addition to more recognition for this type of writing, more direct, specific training is needed for writing center tutors who will be working alongside students on these projects. Building on our work from last year, our presentation will consist of an interactive, workshop and discussion style session in which we will share our findings for best tutoring practices, technological advice, and elicit ideas and suggestions for further consideration of these issues in the writing

FACILITATORS: CRAIG GENTRY, ANGELA BALLARD, AND ALEX FAUST
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI - TUPELO

center from other tutors/consultants.

CLOSING EVENTS

4:00 - 5:00

Event A   **MSWCA Board Meeting**
                                             (Yerby)

Event B   **Conversation Corners**
                    (Lamar Hall, The Writing Center)

Event C   **High School Writing Center**
                                Special Interest Group
       (Lamar Hall, The Writing Center, Room C07)

Thank you for attending MSWCA 2015!