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SOUTHERN DISCOURSE in the CENTER

A Journal of Multiliteracy and Innovation

From the 2021 SWCA Conference

From the 2021 SCWCA Conference

Book Review

Back to the Center

SOUTHERN DISCOURSE *in the* CENTER

A Journal of Multiliteracy and Innovation

Volume 25 | Number 1 | Fall 2021

Southern Discourse in the Center: A Journal of Multiliteracy and Innovation (SDC) is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal published twice per year by the Southeastern Writing Center Association (SWCA). As a forum for practitioners in writing centers, speaking centers, digital centers, and multiliteracy centers, SDC publishes articles from administrators, consultants, and other scholars concerned with issues related to training, consulting, labor, administration, theory, and innovative practices.

Our editorial board welcomes scholarly essays on consulting, research, administration, training, technology, and theory relevant to writing centers, speaking centers, and digital/multiliteracy centers. Article submissions may be based in theoretical and critical approaches, applied practices, or empirical research (qualitative or quantitative). Submissions are evaluated by the editors, and promising articles are sent to our national editorial board for doubleblind review. To honor the journal's historical context, future issues will include special sections that profile the work of regional associations, emerging undergraduate research, and centers across the country, providing a sustained look at regional and national concerns that centers face in the 21st century.

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If you would like more information about SDC or would like to be a reviewer, please email the editors at southerndiscoursejournal@gmail.com.or visit our web site (http://southeasternwritingcenter.wildapricot.org).

Our Mission

The Southeastern Writing Center Association (SWCA) was founded in 1981 to advance literacy; to further the theoretical, practical, and political concerns of writing center professionals; and to serve as a forum for the writing concerns of students, faculty, staff, and writing professionals from both academic and nonacademic communities in the Southeastern region of the United States. A member of the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA), an NCTE Assembly, the SWCA includes in its designated region North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Puerto Rico, and the American Virgin Islands. Membership in the SWCA is open to directors and staff of writing, speaking, and digital centers and others interested in center work from public and private secondary schools, community colleges, colleges and universities, and to individuals and institutions from beyond the Southeastern region.

The Journal

Southern Discourse in the Center: A Journal of Multiliteracy and Innovation is the journal of the Southeastern Writing Center Association. Published twice annually, this peer-reviewed journal promotes a community of writing center scholarship within the southeast and nationally while serving as a forum for innovative work across the field. Subscribe to SDC by becoming a member of SWCA at http://www.iwca-swca.org

SWCA Board Members

Guidelines for Writers

Southern Discourse in the Center invites articles that engage in scholarship about writing centers, speaking centers, digital centers, and multiliteracy centers. The journal welcomes a wide variety of topics, including but not limited to theoretical perspectives in the center, administration, center training, consulting and initiatives. An essay prepared for publication in SDC will address a noteworthy issue related to work in the center and will join an important dialogue that focuses on improving or celebrating center work. Please submit manuscripts to southerndiscoursejournal@gmail.com.

Article Submission Guidelines

Most articles in SDC will be between 3,000 and 5,000 words. We ask that all articles be documented in accordance with the *MLA Style Manual*, 8th Edition. Consistent with traditional writing center practice, SDC promotes a feedback model. Articles will be sent out to our national board for blind review and reviewed by our editorial team. SDC is excited to work with you. For longer articles, please send an email inquiry.

"Back to the Center" Submission Guidelines

Alongside scholarly articles, each issue of SDC will include an article of roughly 1,500 words that focuses on a specific writing center, speaking center, digital center or multiliteracy center. "Back to the Center" will share a center's successes, goals, and hopes for improvement. By incorporating visual images, each "Back to the Center" piece should give readers an authentic sense of the ethos of the center and of the work done there. Each "Back to the Center" submission should also include a section titled "Center Insight." In this section, we'd like to know the numbers: How many sessions are held in the center per semester? How many consultants are working in the center? How many hours a week is the center open? How does consultant recruitment occur? How long is the training process for consultants before they work in the center?

"Consultant Insight" Submission Guidelines

Consistent with the consultant-writer model of the mutual exchange of ideas, we invite consultants to provide insight into center experiences. This article of roughly 2,000 words can be research driven or can take a more narrative and personal approach that illuminates consultant experiences. SDC is interested in both struggles and achievements. The article may focus specifically on one aspect of consulting or it may provide a broader sense of center work.

Book Review Guidelines

Each issue will usually include at least one review of a book relevant to the focus of SDC. Book reviews should be approximately 750-1,500 words in length. Please contact the editors if you are interested in submitting a book review.

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From the Editors

Scott Pleasant
Devon Ralston

This conference retrospective issue of *Southern Discourse* does much more than simply look back at the 2021 SWCA Conference, which, like much of our work during the ongoing COVID-19 situation, was conducted online. The wide-ranging pieces in this issue come together to ask some of the most important questions all of us in the writing center field need to address. How can and should we modify and update our services to meet students where they are rather than where we imagine them to be? How can our centers contribute to positive change, not just for the writers we work with but for the people who work in those centers? These kinds of questions may seem more relevant than ever in this time of unprecedented challenges, but we didn't need a worldwide pandemic to make us consider these issues. Those of us in the writing center field have been thinking about them for years.

Before introducing the various pieces that make up this issue, we should stop to consider the journey we have taken as an organization, as a field, and in society at large over the last two years. When we last met in person as an organization at the 2020 SWCA Conference in Birmingham, COVID-19 was already in the news and most of us were aware of the possible scenarios, but few, if any, of us felt any real sense of urgency. At the outgoing board meeting that year, we talked about the theme and the call for proposals for 2021 meeting scheduled for Memphis. It seemed nearly impossible that something as small as a virus could derail our plans. Now, almost two years later, we have been forced to schedule yet another conference as an online rather than in-person meeting.

Since we last met in Birmingham, the world around us has changed in ways few of us would have thought possible, and yet, through all of the challenges we have faced, this organization and writing center professionals in general have continued the vital work that is so important to our institutions and the students we serve. The story of

writing centers during the Covid-19 pandemic is one of resilience and adaptability. Just two years ago, some center directors debated whether they should integrate any online tutoring options into their centers' services. Then, in just a matter of weeks, most of us transitioned comfortably, if not seamlessly, to a fully online modality via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and other platforms. Just two years ago, most of us had barely considered the very real risks of infection tutors face when they engaged in face-to-face consultations with students. Now, centers that offer in-person tutoring do so with the aid of masks, plexiglass barriers, and ever-present bottles of hand sanitizer.

With the success of vaccines and other public-health measures, a "return to normalcy" appears to be on the horizon (though we should be careful not to tempt fate by assuming that return is inevitable). And now, after working so hard to create safe environments, many of us are probably wondering if we can successfully transition yet again. But we definitely can and will—because we always have. The larger story of writing centers over the last forty years and more has been a tale of constant change and adaptation.

This issue highlights some of the most important kinds of ongoing changes we are seeing in the writing center field. Those changes are almost entirely positive ones, and we will be stronger as a field for embracing them.

In the piece that opens the issue, members of the SWCA board who worked on planning for the 2021 virtual conference focus not only on adaptations required for that conference but on larger changes as well. They remind us of the need to "intentionally decenter whiteness from our discourse" and provide "diverse experiences" and "shared spaces." The change to online modality, they explain, is neither purely a positive nor a negative. They discuss not only the potential for diverse conversations and connections offered by an online modality but also the possibility of "Zoom bombing" that can disrupt such a space. Near the end of that piece, Duane Theobald sums up his reflection on the value of the conference in this way:

> I understand, now more than ever, the necessity for robust and engaging online presences for writing center work. The students my center has served online have been incredibly receptive and grateful for our presence in that

> environment, and I imagine the same is true for those who attended SWCA's online conference.

As Theobald suggests, it seems quite likely that the 2021 SWCA conference led many others in the field to reconsider their methods

The second piece in the issue is an edited transcript of the keynote panel featuring the voices of four Black student tutors. Like the reflection piece that begins the issue, this one focuses on the importance of and the need for broad and lasting changes. The kinds of change advocated for in that keynote discussion are perhaps best summed up by panelist Adara Cox:

> We should acknowledge that diversity matters, inclusion matters … but I feel that it shouldn't be just on the shoulders of those who are these minority groups or the marginalized to acknowledge it and to continue this conversation in the writing center.

This kind of call for systemic change can help us improve what we already do well: connecting with students and other writers on our campus to help them become more effective communicators.

Scott Whiddon and Russell Carpenter continue this focus on changes that can help us connect more effectively with our students. They argue persuasively for incorporation of course-embedded consulting (CEC) as a way of putting consultants into closer and more meaningful contact with student writers.

In addition to these pieces, this issue features an excellent book review by Brittny Byrom and a "Back to the Center" profile by Megan Keaton that demonstrates the positive changes made at the Pfeiffer University Writing Center in recent years. We hope this issue helps you approach and navigate change in your own center.

--Scott and Devon

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Planning a Virtual SWCA Conference: Reflections from the SWCA Board

Janine Morris, Eric Mason, LaKela Atkinson, James Hamby, Deidre Anne Evans Garriott, Brian McTague, Duane Theobald, and Laura Maegan Mercer-Bourne

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations both large and small have had to assess and transform their practices to accommodate social distancing and remote contact while trying to maintain connections with clients and staff. For many universities, the immediate need was to rethink how courses were delivered to students. Many institutions also delayed or cancelled events, froze hiring, revised budgets, and reassigned personnel to address critical needs related to health and safety. Writing centers in particular were often left in precarious positions as staff were cut, policies and procedures were revised, and services were limited (Brooks-Gilles et al.; Slayton et al.).

While these changes reshaped higher education, much of what academics do has always happened away from campuses, especially when it comes to disseminating research and networking with colleagues at professional conferences. As an organizer of such a conference, the SWCA board had not only to revise plans already put in place for our in-person conference (negotiating with companies with which we already had signed contracts, for instance), but also rethink what a professional conference that met the goals and needs of our members could look like. The SWCA board had never hosted an online conference before, and, unlike some larger conferences where the venue could be an impersonal hotel or conference center, SWCA conferences were typically closely connected with universities and their writing centers. To deliver a high-quality conference without such local support, we knew we would have to make some changes to how we designed and delivered the conference.

The field of rhetoric has long been interested in such periods of transformation when old practices no longer make sense and innovative ones emerge, when new technologies or concepts or events reshape old practices. As we reflected on the development and delivery of the 2021

SWCA conference, it occurred to us that one way to think through the process was to explore how our field's own concepts have changed over time. Specifically, we considered how Collin Gifford Brooke's reimagining of the rhetorical canon in his book *Lingua Fracta* might be used as a heuristic to reflect on the production of an online conference. In this book, Brooke considers how changes to how we think and talk about rhetoric have been prompted by digital communication technologies.

Compositionists are generally familiar with the rhetorical canon shown below. Brooke's revised canon attempts to account for how digital ecologies and interfaces have changed, not just the form or shape of texts, but the connections that form within networks of discourse, modality, and technology. Thus, this revised canon seemed a useful tool for thinking through how we developed an online conference for the SWCA community.

Traditional Canon	**Revised Canon**
Invention	Proairesis
Arrangement	Pattern
Style	Perspective
Delivery	Performance
Memory	Persistence

Below, we use Brooke's revised canon to guide our reflection on our experiences planning and executing the 2021 SWCA conference. Brooke describes discursive change as the "ideal exigence" for both learning how to cope with change, and learning how to contribute to it in productive ways—to make our institutions and practices more responsive and more relevant, while perhaps making ourselves less rigid and more empathetic (*xix*).

This retrospective includes the voices of some of the SWCA board members involved in organizing the 2021 conference. Each section includes general information about the changes that took place as we transitioned the conference online alongside author narrative and responses. As more organizations consider the possibilities offered by hosting a virtual conference, we hope this reflection provides some insight into how the process worked for us.

Planning for Possibilities

Originally, we planned to hold the 2021 SWCA conference in Memphis, TN, hosted by Christian Brothers University. In May 2020, as much uncertainty circulated around the pandemic, the board began to consider what was possible under such conditions. "Proairesis" is Brooke's term (borrowed from Roland Barthes) for a process of invention that focuses on the "generation of possibilities" rather than their elimination (86). Invention within today's communication ecology allows for multiple ways of connecting with others, navigating interfaces, and creating collaboratively in ways that resist rather than hasten closure. This gave us confidence that a solution could be found (especially given the available time to plan between May and February). While many larger organizations were forced to cancel their conferences outright, the SWCA Executive Board reached out to current board and senior SWCA members to gather insights about postponing or redesigning the conference. Consider the perspective of SWCA board member Maegan Mercer-Bourne:

> When the board discussed the format for the 2021 conference, I was excited to learn that it could be online. With a COVID baby who was less than a year old at the time, traveling out of town, let alone out of state, was a challenge. Our discussions were open and collaborative and we decided that having a virtual conference was a special opportunity to open the SWCA to people who usually were not able to attend.

Such reflections remind us that conference attendance is always conditioned on a range of personal and institutional factors, and while being virtual could open up the possibility of a greater number of attendees, simply being virtual would not eliminate all obstacles to participation.

One of the conversations we had once we decided to make the conference virtual was what we would charge for attending. Like many organizations, SWCA's budget is largely generated through conference and membership revenue. We decided early on, though, that despite a potential budget shortage due to membership levels declining as a result of pandemic cutbacks, we wanted to make sure the conference was

affordable because we knew everyone else would be having budget shortages as well. The board spent significant time considering what types of conference structures would best serve the organization and its members, while accounting for the financial hardships many were facing. The proairetic process, Brooke claims, broadens one's perspective by revealing "what practices are encouraged or enabled" by a particular assemblage of elements (74).

Engaging in this process allowed the board to proceed more ethically and ecologically, making transparent the relationships and consequences involved in each decision. After gathering input from former and current board members, we decided to move forward with a low-cost option for attendance ($15 for members and $20 for nonmembers) and provided a tiered system for group registration. Comparatively, many academic conferences in Composition and Rhetoric cost upwards of $100 for attendance. Board members weighed the consequences of different options and sought to make the conference as accessible as possible. On July 7, 2020, the board sent an announcement to members that the Memphis conference would be postponed and the 2021 conference would continue in a virtual format.

Playing with Patterns

Because the decision to postpone came in July, the board felt that there was not enough time ahead of the February conference to recruit a new conference host. Therefore, the decision was made that the board would collaboratively host the conference. While this arrangement broke from the standard pattern established by previous conferences, board members felt the inclusion of the whole board, drawing on the resources and expertise of individuals from multiple institutions, made the process more manageable. "Pattern" is Brooke's term for how micro- and macro-views of the world emerge through our positioning, reminding us that movement, identity, and embodiment are still important elements in digital ecologies where the visual and textual often dominate our attention. Board members worked together on different planning and organizing tasks, such as drafting the CFP, reviewing proposals, organizing special events, determining the schedule, designing the program and website, facilitating registration, and composing communications. While conferences often represent a break in our

normal schedules from work and home responsibilities, we had to consider how to be responsive to how these commitments would continue to be active during a virtual conference. As SWCA board member Duane Theobald describes it:

> Organizing sessions for our online conference can best be described as the most elaborate game of Tetris that I've ever played. It took some careful planning, double-checking Google Form responses, and considering themes and trends to help get accepted proposals into slots that worked. Organization was key, and I became a huge fan of spreadsheets and color coding. This work also required us to be willing to negotiate with presenters, especially as circumstances arose, availability changed, etc. In our conference planning, just as in our work as writing center professionals, we had to remember that we were working with real people. Flexibility was key, and sometimes plans needed to change.

The "Trauma and Transformation" theme that was chosen for the conference recognized that many individuals and centers were facing significant changes to their routines. It only made sense that the conference transform as well, breaking away from previous patterns in thinking about how key events of the conference might be reimagined virtually. Inspired by her mentor, Dr. Karen Keaton Jackson, SWCA board member LaKela Atkinson introduced the idea of engaging with larger conversations circulating in summer 2020 around racial injustice and the pandemic by having a keynote panel dedicated to elevating the voices, experiences, and practices of undergraduate and graduate tutors who identify as Black/African American. The SWCA board agreed that the keynote panel would be a great way to engage with voices we don't traditionally hear—both regarding position and culture—and to make space for students—particularly African-American students—to present their perspectives on the conference theme of trauma and transformation.

Dr. Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison was invited to chair the panel and keynote panelists (Chanara Andrews-Bickers, Adara Cox, Genevieve Onyiuke-Kennedy, and Micah Williams) were nominated by their writing center directors and selected by a committee of board members. Even before the conference began, this decision provided us an

opportunity for critical reflection. Consider SWCA board member Deidre Anne Evans Garriott's report on one of the meetings between the panelists and the review committee:

> During the first meeting with Talisha and the panelists, I was hopeful that they would take off with ideas relevant to the theme that the SWCA board had developed for the online conference. When the tutors were hesitant about the theme, I prompted them to be honest about what was causing the struggle, and the tutors pointed out several issues with the theme and CFP: once again, "well-meaning" white people were asking to consume Black trauma to learn from and, additionally, we assumed that trauma always leads to transformation, especially positive. The discussion with the tutors left an indelible mark on me as an instructor and Writing Center administrator, as well as a continuing member of the SWCA board. Because the tutors were able to speak freely with board members in this venue, they were able to push back against the microaggressions we committed. Ultimately, the keynote panel was one of the most provocative, powerful parts of the conference, and was only made possible because we broke established patterns. My hope for SWCA and all conferences is to look at our example, to reach out to peer, graduate, and professional tutors, and elevate their stories, voices, and status in our organizations.

These conversations convinced us of the continued need, not just to use the conference as a way to platform those on the margins, but to intentionally decenter whiteness from our discourse. The SWCA board felt this more inclusive and collaborative start to the conference did match the committee's overall approach to the event better than a solo keynote presentation would have, but we also realized that elevating the voices of Black/African-American tutors could not mark the end of our work. The panelists' experiences and feedback pointed to the need for the SWCA, as a predominantly white organization, to continue to interrogate its assumptions and practices. As SWCA board member Lakela Atkinson reminds us:

> In our research and panels, we may discuss marginalized groups and the challenges they bring to writing center spaces based on

> identity and personal experiences, but we may not always honor the first-hand stories they share. Not only did the keynote school us on their stories, but they reminded us that we as an organization still need to understand intention and impact. Having student feedback about the theme and its CFP challenged us to examine our own intentions and the way that those intentions come across to those we hope to impact. The student panelists reminded us to focus on uplifting stories. Trauma is all too familiar in the African-American community, and while I am an African-American woman and writing center professional, I am not immune to this reminder. I appreciate the students using their power to help us examine our practices as individuals and an organization, as well as encourage us to work alongside them in the future to ensure that our impact is more intentional and positive.

The keynote panel did provide Chanara, Adara, Genevieve, and Micah a platform, but it also offered new ways to theorize and plan keynote panels that include the people who are on the ground tutoring. It reminds us to intentionally seek out stories of victory and success, not only trauma and tragedy, as we try to cope with global tragedies. When we break from established patterns grounded in our assumptions of what a conference should be, we can also begin to dismantle the other systems that have held conferences back.

Changes were made to the presentation options and conference interfaces as well. Just as "new media writing subverts the expectations we have for print texts" (Brooke 93), making the conference virtual allowed us to subvert some traditional conference attendance expectations. In addition to traditional panels, roundtables, and workshops, participants were able to propose asynchronous multimodal presentations that were then linked to virtual discussions during the conference. Allowing a greater variety of presentation formats led to a number of creative and insightful productions that took advantage of genres and modalities not often used at SWCA conferences, from parody videos to interactive online galleries. Eventually, conference web pages were constructed showcasing digital ads from sponsors, interactive schedules were built allowing participants to easily add sessions of interest to their online calendars, and unique events such as the Discord game night hosted by the Nova Southeastern

University MA program in Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media were developed. All of these digital innovations helped rearrange the typical maps of meaning that conference participants traversed, reminding us of the various roles each of us play as we wander across interfaces, creating links and leaving traces that change these spaces as we move through them. There was still much work to do in designing these interfaces, however.

Designing with Perspective

Putting together a digital conference means designing more than just the pre-conference communications, or the booklets and name badges attendees would typically receive on arrival, but a series of interfaces and interactions through which planners and participants would construct and access conference content before and as it happened. It requires thinking through the perspectives inhabited by different end users looking to accomplish various purposes. "Perspective" is the term Brooke uses to explore "what style might look like when we consider it in terms of interfaces rather than static texts" (114). While we intended for the conference to feel similar in tone to our in-person conference, we also wanted to embrace the possibilities that came from using virtual interfaces and online modalities in new ways. While changes like the pre-recorded presentations and events like the Discord game night helped accomplish this, as SWCA board member James Hamby reports, these changes also manifested in some unexpected ways:

> After nearly a year of isolation in quarantine, we were able to make new acquaintances and see the interiors of houses and apartments other than our own. Seeing presenters with their bookshelves, knick-knacks, and artwork in the background gave us a sense of their personalities that we might never have experienced at an in-person conference. It was also delightful to have surprise visits from pets and small children; my own four-year-old son made an appearance while I was presenting as he groggily came downstairs looking for breakfast.

In previous years, such "interruptions" during professional events might have been cause for consternation, but the pandemic seemed to make people more accepting of the home circumstances of their colleagues,

and more aware of the difficulties of juggling professional and private lives. Such moments remind us that a key part of bringing people together for a conference is the building of community, which we felt was an urgent need for many during the pandemic. Though distanced, the perspectives we gained of each other were in some ways more fully human, leading to increased opportunities for empathy and understanding. As SWCA Vice-President Brian McTague reminds us:

> In planning a conference, it is vital to not forget that the reason we come together at conferences is for a sense of community: engaging in dialogue with our peers, and sharing and learning things about our practice as professionals, but also forging and maintaining bonds, including meaningful friendships. Having a team that understood that this was an essential part of solving the 2021 conference "puzzle" helped us deepen our own relationships via an ongoing conversation that began with the first meeting about moving the conference online and continues with the unpacking of the entire process through this collaborative reflection.

This team orientation was facilitated by the many digital applications, such as email, Zoom, and the Google suite, which allowed us to converse and collaborate synchronously and asynchronously on shared documents, forms, and spreadsheets. As Brooke writes, "one of the things that new media interfaces do stylistically is to help us move from the abstracted, single perspective of the reader of a static text or the viewer of a painting to the multiple and partial perspectives necessary for the many forms of new media" (114). This view of perspective as necessarily partial recognizes the value that board members with diverse experiences brought to these shared spaces, and the need for feedback and guidance along the way.

We were sensitive to the concern of how access to these spaces might change who attended the conference and how they engaged with conference sessions. Some of our special events, such as the Graduate Program Open House, were open to the public, and we displayed the url for this session publicly and encouraged SWCA members to share it with their home institutions. It didn't seem advisable, however, to make all conference links and materials public. We did require password-based

logins for attendees to access links to conference events. Not only did we want to maintain some linkage between having paid to attend the conference and access to materials and events, we were also aware of the possibility of "Zoom-bombing," in which someone might intentionally disrupt a session if able to do so (which has happened at other online conferences).

Additionally, we debated the value and risk of recording sessions for future access and ultimately decided that we would not record presentations, so that conversations could be as open and honest as possible without exposing participants to future scrutiny. Taking into account the perspectives of ourselves as a conference host providing access to paid participants, of presenters seeking to share their research and experiences, and of participants looking to have fruitful and meaningful conversations without worry, we felt we struck a balance that created a safe space for professional interactions.

Assembling the Performance

The content of the SWCA conference was distributed in a variety of ways using different media, including email messages, social media posts, videos, podcasts, and more. Pre-recorded presentations allowed participants to collaborate in new ways, and the real-time performances of presentations were broadcast from across the southeastern United States, and as far away as Lebanon. "Performance" is Brooke's term that reminds us that digital media are not uniform experiences that are unaffected by their mode of delivery, but are always part of particular assemblages of discourse that happen in specific places and times that work to assign value and meaning to those events (192).

Zoom rooms were created for the various sessions, with presenters making use of embedded functionality such as surveys, breakout rooms, chat, and screen-sharing. Volunteers were scheduled to appear at the start of each season to ensure that things went smoothly and to confirm there were no technical problems. Various efforts were made to ensure that what James calls the "human touch" remained present even in a virtual conference, including a Zoom room (named the "Compass Room") set up as an informal "help desk" which was staffed by a live board member throughout the conference. While board members included in this article

variously described their experience of the overall conference as "rewarding," "impressive," and "truly fantastic," it was sometimes through personal exchanges in these third spaces where the important informal connections that accompany a typical conference happened. As Brian writes:

> Some of the most meaningful interactions I personally had during the conference happened in the SWCA "Compass Room." The hunger for human interaction in a professional, yet friendly environment, was very apparent, perhaps for myself most of all. While I still very much missed the in-person presentations, conversations, coffees, and meals, working at the "help desk" filled some of the void that so many of us experienced amid the pandemic and political unrest of the year. It was rewarding to be able to answer event-related and organizational questions, and to just have brief moments of laughter and connection. Having such a space part of but separate from the presentations of the conference seemed integral to its overall success.

Although we felt that the SWCA brought a high degree of professionalism to the design and implementation of our virtual conference, the real-time performance of the event was not without its difficulties, of course. As SWCA board member Eric Mason points out:

> There were a good number of challenges to address that, for the most part, remained invisible to conference participants (and even to many SWCA board members), from issues with our event registration system, to needing to reschedule presenters who didn't account for time zone differences when requesting their presentation times. This being our first time hosting an online conference, and doing so within a necessarily tight budget, in many ways we acted in the tradition of *bricoleurs*—improvising no-cost or ad-hoc solutions with the materials we had "at hand." Every single presentation during the conference, for instance, was delivered within the regular Zoom accounts of just two people.

The combination of positive and challenging experiences throughout the conference illustrate the complexities of hosting a conference in a virtual

assemblage. Like Brooke's work, we see our experience as an "ecolog[y] of practice," which allowed us to focus "on the strategies and tactics we bring to bear on new media at the same time that our technologies constrain and empower us" (41). While elements of this ecology of practice shifted in going virtual, maintaining our focus on building community ensured that the values of the SWCA continued to take center stage.

Benefiting from Persistence

We hope the innovations created, friendships deepened, and insights gained during the SWCA 2021 conference planning process persist into the future. "Persistence" is Brooke's term for considering how our performances are not merely stored for later access, but actively construct patterns that remain available and influential as they create new connections and new opportunities for aggregation and invention in the future. Having successfully organized our first virtual conference with over 60 sessions, 250 presenters, and 350 attendees, the SWCA hopes that we continue to embrace innovation and flexibility, allowing a diverse range of individuals and centers to benefit from the conversations and support within the SWCA community.

Below, we close with some reflections on the lessons that persist from our memories of the conference, and how we think those experiences have shaped our understanding of the relationships and connections among our professional and private lives going forward:

> **Maegan**: I have always loved attending the SWCA conference, but the one for 2021 will stand out in my mind for many reasons. The flexibility was just what I needed at this point in my life, and I hope that future conferences will be able to have some kind of online component for others like me, as well as those with other barriers such as physical ability or financial status. This year has stripped back a lot of the formality of discourse. It has made me realize that we have to have the difficult conversations, that everyone is responsible for change, and that everyone can be responsible for moving forward from this tragic year, instead of simply allowing the status quo to continue.

Duane: My biggest takeaway from the online conferencing environment connects to my biggest takeaway from COVID as a whole: I understand, now more than ever, the necessity for robust and engaging online presences for writing center work. The students my center has served online have been incredibly receptive and grateful for our presence in that environment, and I imagine the same is true for those who attended SWCA's online conference. They had access to a meaningful, purposeful professional development opportunity, at an affordable cost, and the SWCA must keep this in mind moving forward.

LaKela: The 2021 SWCA Conference emphasized multiple ways of connecting with colleagues and responding to various needs. We all need flexibility and accommodation at some point in our lives, and the success of our fully virtual conference during the COVID pandemic is testament to the fact that our members and attendees were awaiting this support, and that the conference experience can be delivered virtually without sacrificing quality. In fact, I felt more capable of processing information in the digital setting due to easy access to conference materials and due to not having to run here and there to attend or begin sessions. The engagement, feedback, and ability to document sessions are particularly valuable for future conferences.

Deidre: The 2021 SWCA Conference and its success emphasized the importance of accessible, online content for low- to no-cost as tutors and WCAs seek to make their centers more just places for learning. The move to digital environments not only made us rethink how to package the conference; it fundamentally changed who was provided a platform and, therefore, how authority was conferred. It demonstrates the importance of uplifting the voices of people who come from communities that white communities, especially academia, have historically targeted and marginalized. Working with those groups and putting aside our egos as we did when we listened to the keynote panelists should inform both future SWCA meetings as well as other conferences.

James: What I really valued about this conference was the way it highlighted the importance of community in our professional and personal lives. When the pandemic hit, writing centers everywhere had to adapt quickly to new realities in order to keep helping students, and the organizers of this conference had the same type of selfless attitude in doing whatever it took to create a meaningful experience for everyone who attended. Many people put in a lot of extra time and effort to keep our SWCA community connected through this conference, and it was inspiring to see how much it was appreciated by all who attended.

Eric: When taking over the SWCA digital content developer position, I didn't anticipate having to help design the interface for a virtual conference, but working as part of the SWCA team to plan the 2021 conference was a useful reminder that the conceptual tools and practical skills we have available to us as communication specialists (whether we call our field "writing," "rhetoric," "communication," "student services," or something else) are themselves very flexible, and prepare us to work responsibly and responsively in a range of ecologies.

Brian: As the SWCA vice-president during this tumultuous time, I leaned heavily on my previous experience hosting an in-person SWCA conference in 2018 at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. While we were in uncharted territory in terms of planning and executing an online conference, I was confident in my ability to mentor those in our community taking an active role in the process, guiding them with advice of lessons learned and best practices. It was a tremendous asset to have such a motivated and dedicated team of board members willing to take on all the tasks hosting a conference entails, and doing so in such a short time frame. The work accomplished is something we, and hopefully others, will be able to use as a model for future events.

Janine: Hosting the virtual conference in many ways was more difficult than we initially thought it would be when we decided to postpone the Memphis conference in July 2020. However, the feedback we heard and connections we got to experience made

> the experience more than worthwhile. As SWCA president, I was so proud of our board members and grateful for the amazing community that makes up SWCA.

We hope reflecting on our experiences here provides readers some insights into what went into planning and hosting the 2021 SWCA conference and that our success may perhaps serve as a model for other professional organizations in organizing fully online or hybrid conferences. We look forward to future opportunities to bring the SWCA together as a community, and appreciate the work of all members of the SWCA in helping us confront the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

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Black Tutor Perspectives on Trauma and Transformation: An Edited Transcript of the 2021 SWCA Keynote Panel

Keynote Panel: Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison, LaKela Atkinson, Chanara Andrews-Bickers, Micah Williams, Gerry Kennedy, Adara Cox

Introduction: LaKela and Talisha

LaKela

The idea for the keynote panel for the 2021 SWCA (Southeastern Writing Centers Association) Conference initially came through a conversation with my mentor, Dr. Karen Keaton Jackson. Her ties to SWCA go back to 2005, and she was instrumental in proposing the idea of an HBCU representative—a position that I now hold years later. SWCA had recently released its anti-racist statement in response to the heightened killings and racial tension in 2020. With hopes to involve more of the HBCU input, I conversed with her about possible ideas to back up our statements and be more inclusive through actions.

In our discussion, we considered panel ideas that would highlight marginalized groups and present a different perspective for attendees and the SWCA organization overall. The theme, "transformation in an era of change" provided the perfect place to bring about this change. After we proposed ideas and bounced them off of one another, we had the perfect idea: students would lead a panel in an effort to challenge the idea of who holds authority. More specifically, the panel would be comprised of individuals whose voices are primarily silenced in predominantly white professional organizations. Since so few HBCU institutions were actively involved, we would focus on African-American students. Our hope was that writing center professionals and their student staff would be engaged in a new format and be more willing to learn from those who

were directly impacted by issues involving racism, injustice, and identity.

After presenting the idea to the SWCA president and Board, I saw overwhelming support for this panel. Soon, interested board members formed a keynote planning committee, which consisted of President Dr. Janine Morris; At-large Representative Dr. Deidre Anne Evans Garriott, George State Representative Mr. Duane Theobold, and HBCU Representative LaKela Atkinson. We divided up tasks, which included creating an e-mail to the Board, drafting a CFP, securing a facilitator, developing proposal criteria, and forming a proposal review committee.

Talisha

When Deidre Anne Evans Garriott reached out to me about moderating the keynote panel, I said yes without hesitation. I appreciate any effort to draw in or center the voices of student-tutors and this keynote seemed like a great way to continue that effort. I assisted with reviewing nominations and selecting the four amazing Black people who shared their insight for the keynote. Below, you'll find an edited transcript from the 2021 keynote. We began the panel with four prepared questions, and then continued with audience questions. As moderator, I also asked follow-up questions based on previous responses and conversation with the panelists. Authors have kept their responses as close to the original as possible, though sometimes editing for clarity or, in a couple of places, where the audio was lost. I hope you'll enjoy reading the responses from the student panelists and find them as enlightening as I did.

Edited Transcript

Talisha (Prepared Question): What do you think are the consequences of Diversity & Inclusion efforts being reactionary rather than proactive, and what actions can or should the writing center take in promoting stronger campus culture around attitudes around race?

Adara: A consequence to being reactionary is that discussion on Diversity and Inclusion becomes a one and done process. There is no real

transformation occurring when conversations regarding awareness happen only when something problematic arises. Because the writing center is a space that serves diverse students, discussions regarding Diversity and Inclusion should be a part of mandatory training. A way to be proactive in acknowledging the importance of Diversity and Inclusion is to have consistent dialogue about what that looks like in writing centers. All writing centers are unique; therefore, measures of proactivity should be defined by the institutions' needs and student population.
A proactive process can also be asking consultants what they would like to learn more about regarding Diversity and Inclusion, and gathering information about what they already know, to ensure that proactivity within the writing center is as effective as possible.

Chanara: The consequence of being reactionary rather than proactive is doing too little too late. The efforts run the risk of being merely performative and will, to students affected by the lack of true diversity and inclusion efforts, be a sign of Writing Centers prioritizing their image rather than their writers. We have to emphasize the "action" in proactive and support students of color and international students in more ways than just saying "grading grammar is racist." Writing Centers must be intentional in the assertions of our missions and our work to cultivate anti-racist, anti-xenophobic spaces. So much of what we can do as consultants or tutors is limited by our occupation of this liminal space between peers and, to a certain extent (that is real or perceived), academic authorities. That small window of opportunity is essentially slammed shut when we wait until after an issue arises to make changes. One way our centers can proactively promote stronger campus culture and attitudes around race is to expand our reach to faculty. We have plenty of resources and workshops for students but if they are being met with these harmful attitudes by their instructors, there will not likely be any change. If such workshops were to happen, I think they would have to be led by Writing Center directors to mitigate any issues related to the imbalance of institutional status or power where consultants and tutors are concerned.

Micah: I do agree with those comments. When you do have diversity and inclusion efforts that are reactionary within the writing center, they also tend to be temporary. When we usually think about racist actions,

we focus more on the individual event more on the institutions at play that continue those individual events. So, once a particular instance is solved, such as through a workshop or a confrontation, it seems like racism is solved in the writing center, which we know is not true. I also feel that with making things so individual, it also leads to another type of racism itself, for those that affected by racism tend to be pointed out as the issue for bringing up discrimination against them. Or, racism in the writing center is looked at as something to be "dealt with" rather than an effort for everyone to collaborate and elevate marginalized people to take a proactive stand against racism.

In terms of practices, conversation is always important. Collaboration with both students and administration on campus can help as well because as it comes to the writing center, we want to make sure we help our students with as many resources and connections to the university as possible, especially for Black students and students of color. Feedback through tutor surveys is important, too. These surveys not only focus on the effectiveness of a session, but also on how we made those students feel so that we can best develop our practices with people first rather than on pedagogy.

Genny: One thing I'd like to add is that oftentimes it's actually quite understandable, even from the perspective of a Black tutor, why a writing center might be reactionary rather than proactive in their endeavors to actually be anti-racist. And while that is understandable, one thing that is often a reactionary tactic is focusing on the education of those who have exhibited any sort of action that might be counterproductive in the direction of antiracism. But also something to keep in mind is providing a place for celebration and recognition for the black tutors in your spaces as well. When it comes to moving towards an antiracist space and moving towards an antiracist writing center, recognition and support of your black tutors is really important. While education is absolutely necessary to continue the culture of due respects and appreciation for those who are doing the work and labor within your writing center, there is celebration and joy to be had as well. Centering joy is also something that is often lost in these sorts of initiatives, which means oftentimes that labor falls upon on black individuals to have to subvert any sort of negative feelings that they're having while having no

outlet for that. So, there is also due space for Black individuals in and of themselves to have that space to be celebrated and experience joy.

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Talish (Prepared Question): Tutors face what can be conflicting obligations to promote students' academic success and also students' stories. What do you as tutors see as the relation between those two obligations?

Micah: Working in the writing center is tricky because I feel that we are supplemental programs to the Academy, more specifically the English Department. So, if an English department is all-inclusive of different habituses[1] of writing, that's great and easier on tutors to promote that within our writing centers. If not inclusive, we end up falling into that battle between supporting a writer's story and self through their writing and teaching them what we know is best for a good paper in that course—which commonly equates to writing papers in a White habitus of writing: logic over feelings, has to be concise, "scholarly" language, a clear thesis and structure throughout the paper.

It's not a bad way to write at all, and so we could potentially say "we want to teach you this so that as a writer, you know multiple ways to write" and then go from there to make their academic voice sound most like them. However, when one type of writing style is privileged over every other style as the most effective way to write, that's where we have issues. And many remedial and core-class English Courses are like that—you write how I want you to write, or you fail the class.

All that being said, I feel we should do our best to balance both obligations and to know which papers a personal voice is most

[1] By "habitus", I mean "a dominant set of durable and flexible dispositions to read and write in English, even though it is not static nor unified." This definition comes from the scholar Asao B. Inoue. See Inoue,"Afterword: Narratives that Determine Writers and Social Justice Writing Center Work." *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, vol 14, no. 1, 2016, pp. 94-99, http://www.praxisuwc.com/inoue-141.

appropriate for—for personal narratives, argumentative papers, research papers with a personal tie-in, I think it should be encouraged to shake up the traditional academic structure if the professor allows. But if they don't, we focus on teaching them the traditional way to write while gesturing them to express themselves in the content of their papers. It also gives us a challenge to critique non-inclusive courses and Academia as well, perhaps by talking with any diversity and inclusion teams within the English department or core curriculum to fix said issues and to expand our habituses of writing so that they are inclusive of more stories and more people.

Genny: One thing I'd also like to add...I know this question sort of angles towards what is the obligation that tutors have in addressing this sort of conflict-of-interest, but I also want to talk about the relationship for writing center because oftentimes, of course, we want to preserve the narrative voice our clients or our students we are working with. But I think that this is also a place of advocacy that could possibly exist for writing centers. Oftentimes, at schools—I'm from Georgia Tech—when it comes to trying to address professors with any sort of practices they do in the classroom that say, "You can only write in Standard American English" or "I only accept this type of grammar," I think that that's a wonderful place for writing centers to step in and go and have people have those conversations with the professors. Because the conversations don't just end within the center. I think our work needs to be done outside of that because if we truly do want to promote a way for students to have academic success while also preserving their voice, we fully need to make sure that the institutes that we work with are on-board. And think that as we have faculty and staff in our own writing centers that often have a lot of leverage in different classrooms and in different leadership experiences. I think that that is exactly what should be utilized whether you are an ally or a part of the community. This is what advocacy can look like, and I think that that would make it all the more easier for tutors to address the student's concerns, and if they want to have any sort of appeals process as well, those are the sort of things I think would be great when it comes to addressing that tricky situation.

Chanara: I wholeheartedly agree with Micah and Genevieve. And I think that, as Genevieve is saying, what we really need is an epistemic

overhaul of what we're even thinking of academic successes being. So that is something that takes time. It is so hard to honor your own moral and cultural code, honestly, as you're looking at the stories and you're like, "This is such a rich narrative and I love this," and the student wants you to tear it apart. So, I think we have to—it's something so sustained—it's such a big undertaking that I think just takes time and it takes a lot of effort outside of our centers and really engaging the campus community as a whole.

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Talisha (Prepared Question): Sometimes students bring in work that may be very personal or offensive to tutors. How have you handled difficult or traumatizing sessions, and what advice would you give to others?

Chanara: My experience and advice on handling these situations definitely depends on where the session falls between "difficult" and "traumatizing" because those are two separate, distinct places. If we're dealing with something difficult, we can work to communicate the difficulty of that situation academically and socially. When students bring in work that they might not even think of as problematic or being violent toward certain communities, you can explain to them, "In terms of your assignment, this is hurting you because it's not supporting your argument, it's not strong, it's not doing these things," and also explain the histories and implications of these languages in these ideas outside of their assignments, outside of their classrooms, and outside of our campus. My advice on the handling of traumatizing sessions or traumatizing material is not to because yes, we are students and we are workers, but we are people first. I can't, in good conscience, provide a template for dealing with traumatic material and I think that's where we go back to writing centers being proactive. It's the job of the writing center to make sure that consultants and tutors know: you have an out, you have someone you can go to when this is too much for you. We have protocols in place for dealing with these things.

Genny: I really want to echo, first of all, Chanara's points. There is a very strong distinction to be made so I appreciate you making that

difference between difficult and traumatic. Because honestly, when it comes to traumatic situations, I think that it very much is within the rights of consultants or tutors to step away but I also think that's so possibly a great place for allyship to exist. You know, there are instances where, for whatever reason you have to step away from a consultation whether it be, "Oh, I actually think that there's a better expert on this," but if you are like a Black tutor or you are of the group that is being targeted from whatever problematic work that you're reading and you don't want to do that labor of teaching somebody, possibly you could step away and call on another tutor and be like, "Hey, I'm having a kind of a difficult situation here and I don't feel comfortable. If you possibly could take over this situation for me, it would be really helpful." But, of course, this would have to be a conversation that you would have within the writing center and expectations of one another prior to any sort of situation like this happening because sometimes it is helpful for other people who might not experience as much trauma or they have the privilege of not being specifically attacked by somebody's work to come in and go and actually call this person into a discussion of, "Hey, this is why your writing is exhibiting this, this, and this, and here's how we can move along." I think that that could possibly be another way to deal with difficult situations. But stepping away, I definitely think, is helpful for preserving the tutor's perspective which is very important.

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Talisha (Follow-up Question) That's an interesting point. Do professional tutors have a different responsibility to stay within difficult or traumatic sessions based on those roles?

Chanara: As a student tutor, I can only speak from that perspective. But again, as a human being, I don't think that it is your professional, personal, or moral obligation to stay in any situation that is damaging to you psychologically or physically. There have to be protocols put in place and I think that you can say, for whatever reason, "I am not comfortable moving forward with this I can refer you to someone," or not. There is a limit; there are lines that have to be drawn and a lot of the issues we have are because lines haven't been drawn before. You have to set boundaries for yourself in any space.

Micah: Yes, I agree with Chanara on that. Again, I am an undergraduate tutor, and a younger one at that, but in terms of faculty, I do think there is a place, especially if you are non-BIPOC or effectively traumatized by the material, to be able to call it out. Even if I do see something that is like, "Wow, is this incorrect Information," I wouldn't want to let a paper slip away with offensive language or ideas in it. And that's for the sake of that student, the tutor, their grade, and for their potential audience. There's nothing more awkward and frustrating than for a problematic paper to come out from a Writing Center and to a professor who's wondering how it made it out in that state.

And so a lot of the issues with difficulty with these situations, because I do believe there's a difference between "difficult" and "traumatizing", has been more about incorrect information or just ignorance towards historical backgrounds and contexts within the arguments they are trying to make. A lot of those issues can be solved by asking why and playing devil's advocate to see where their arguments lie in, or perhaps suggesting ideas that are more correct or true in those essays. But I still know that ignorance hurts a lot. I do think it has more chance to be remedied than blatant racism because it's about having those student-tutor conversations to gather the "whys" and intentions of someone's writing.

There comes a time where you need to set those boundaries, and so especially for Black tutors, if it becomes too much, it would be best to send the situation to someone else who can handle it, to particular faculty and writing center directors.

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Talisha (Prepared Question): Oftentimes the staff of a writing center may not be very racially diverse. How have you experienced the emotional labor of being a Black tutor, particularly if you are the only or one of few Black or BIPOC tutors on staff? How is this labor, or other aspects of being a Black tutor, impacted when others misunderstand the mission and purpose of the writing center?

Adara: In my experience as a Black tutor, it's about being double-conscious. I'm always aware and recognize how different people are, how I live, and how others live as well. And I always feel the pressure to voice out matters of race and to be socially conscious about others' experiences beside my own just because that person lives with the experience of being othered, or belonging to a minority group. I also always feel like I need to place my identity within my work because if I'm not going to address the matter, who else is going to do it?

We should acknowledge that diversity matters, inclusion matters, just perspectives and experiences matter; but I feel that it shouldn't be just on the shoulders of those who are these minority groups or the marginalized to acknowledge it and to continue this conversation in the writing center. Doing this will not only make us better tutors, but also a better community, and a better university in general.

Genny: Yeah, I'll jump in, absolutely. The conversation about emotional labor and what the responsibilities are for Black people in these conversations is always a tricky one. Particularly, after last summer or the uprisings and such that we saw, the notion of reaching out to your black acquaintances, your black friends, your black co-workers and you know saying, "Hey, do you need anything?" or "How can I support you?", and those indications that you are not just paying attention to them now but you know I guess it goes back to that reactive notion is that you are cognizant of when things happen and when they might be harmful to the people in your work space. One of the things that I enjoyed that COMLAB did at Georgia Tech over the summer was that they gave me the option to step away from tutoring for a bit because I and a lot of other people weren't feeling very great seeing black death every day on the news, social media, etc. And they offered to compensate me regardless.

I think that's what allyship looks like, and I think that when you reassure your black workers your black friends that you will be there even if they do not call upon you, but also you know respecting space and all that sort of thing. It's a delicate balance and of course black people are not a monolith. So, you really should pay attention to the individual you are talking to and trying to accommodate and appreciate. That's when I think that I feel recognized and seen and supported. And so it's also difficult

being I believe that I was you know there are like a couple of black centers assistants, but I was really the black tutor. So, there are other black people in my space, but there definitely is that pressure because at the same time when writing centers or any sort of institution wants to, you know, make some sort of initiative, if they make it in a vacuum without any black people in the room it's bound to have holes in it. But at the same time, calling black people into the room and requesting labor and being at them but don't speak up...

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Talisha (Question). Thanks for those responses. Before we open it up to audience questions, I want to give the panelists an opportunity to respond to another question that came up in our preparation: During our earlier discussion in planning this panel, we talked about the conference theme and the language used in the call for proposals, specifically about how the conference frame's trauma. That conversation did not make it into our planned questions, but that was an oversight on my part, and I'd like to give any panelists who'd like a chance to share their thoughts.

Chanara: I brought this concern to the table because the conference title "Trauma and Transformation" was unsettling for me. The language is irresponsible and a little bit violent. As I said before, we have to honor ourselves and protect ourselves. Trauma is not something that we should be looking at as a tool to develop as scholars, or as tutors, or in any other way. Trauma is still damaging. Trauma is *trauma* and it's ours to work through -- it's a personal journey. So I think we have to be certain that we're not exploiting people's trauma and we're not romanticizing it as something that will "make you better" and "help you grow" because it stunts so much of our psychological growth. You just have to be cognizant of the ways that we're even presenting for entering into discussions about trauma.

Genny: I think that Chanara could not have said it better. That is such a trap that a lot of people fall into -- the romanticization of trauma. The concept that "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Oh no! It can make you quite weak, unfortunately. One thing to be mindful of is – as I was recalling the previous summer (2020), and [the trauma] is ongoing,

[even though] it's not on t.v. anymore -- the concept of Black trauma and Black troubles often being the center of whatever conversation. I don't know if y'all are familiar with the terms "trauma porn," but it's the concept you're just engaging in traumatic stories often and you seem to get some sort of weird enjoyment from it. Basically, because you're like, "Oh my gosh, wow! This is so horrible," but you keep doing it, you know. I think that it's easy to fall into that trap because of the negative attention bias that media has. I was talking about this earlier, but when it comes to like Black History Month, which I'm sure a lot of writing centers and doing different sorts of things around to celebrate all of the all writers and poets and we have— if you're not, you should. And when it comes to talking about Black history, people center our trauma, they center slavery, center things that happen to us. They don't actually talk about the greatness and the triumphs that we've made. I think that, instead of calling for more traumatic stories, because we have a *plethora* of them, that we should actually call upon people to share their stories of triumph, of joy, of celebration. There are difficulties that we certainly have experienced, and I think the stories should be told because people forget. But they are often centered because, truth be told, I think there is a fascination with Black struggles and Black trauma, and I think that we should move away from that because we are not fully humanized when we only see pain. We are so much more than that. So I definitely think it was a strange thing to call for and I definitely agree with Chanara's point. There is so much more to be asked for. We are more than our pain.

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Talisha (Audience Question): Thank you. We had some questions that have come up throughout the talk. Specifically, people are asking about your comments about triumph and joy. Would anyone like to share more thoughts about that? What are your triumphs or joys that you'd like to share?

Chanara: I am definitely opening it up to Adara and Micah if you all want to chime in here. And thanks, Genevieve, for even introducing joy into this conversation because joy is transformative. So, joys that I've had recently…Being selected for this panel! I was very excited about that and I'm really happy to be here. On Monday I was having a

really hard day and I posted it on my Instagram like, “Does anyone else feel like they can’t write anything worth reading right now?” and so many of my classmates responded, “Me too!” Then I presented the paper in my class and got positive feedback from my professor. I was so stressed out about that, so those affirmations made my day. That’s my triumph.

Adara: Something that happened for me that I feel very blessed about... I am also very happy to be a part of this panel to talk about my experience here. But I am also presenting tomorrow for my own personal presentation, and I’ve been just very nervous about it for the past couple weeks. And just hearing Dr. Morris and my mentor reassure me that I'm doing a great job just made me feel great because I am very passionate about this work and it does put an emotional toll on me because I do get very emotionally invested. Hearing people say that I am doing a great job, to keep doing what you’re doing, and that this is going places is something that brings me joy all the time.

Micah: I agree with all the panelists in that I'm happy to be here, too. I was honestly really shocked when I got the email...like, “Oh...okay!” I think something that brings me joy is going back and reading the surveys my students have sent me through our writing center’s online database system. It's just nice to see encouraging responses from the students, and so sometimes when I’m having a bad day or feel like I haven’t had the best tutoring session, I go back to those surveys and read them because, you know, it’s nice to hear from students. It’s also nice to see encouragement from other tutors and to hear about others’ joys and triumphs.

And I think that talking about joy is a perfect way to have allyship, too, because I definitely agree that trauma’s not the only way we can have allyship to begin with. What makes us humans is that we have our joys and successes, no matter how big or small they are, and that we can include them in our conversations as we get to know one another as people, especially in this online format. Usually, many writing centers usually can bring tutors together through a physical breakroom and physical contact with one another. But sometimes, it’s just good to hop on Zoom, debrief, talk about how your day’s been or how a particular

session went. That's as good of a time as ever to also know your Black tutors as individuals with their own personalities and their own ways of working as a tutor, instead of treating us like we're in one monolith.

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Talisha (Audience Question): What advice do you have for moving past "diversity and inclusion" and moving towards transformative change in the writing center, particularly within an institution that has remained pretty silent on these issues? I think this question is referring, in part, to discussions on how "diversity" and "inclusion" can become empty words, or words without action.

Genny : First, I just want to shout out the people who wrote this question. I know that, once again, I am speaking to peers when I say that specific words have specific meanings and often times they are conflated. "Diversity," "inclusion," "equity," and "justice": they all mean different things and, while diversity and inclusion are great, I think honestly if you ask me, I think writing centers are already moving in that direction quite comfortably. Equity and justice is a lot more difficult to accomplish because, at least to me, what you're talking about is this complete upheaval of an institution, starting from square one. Because when it comes to equity, it's kind of interesting— I'm sure y'all have probably been trainings or seen any sort of graphics online about the difference between equity and equality. Equality is sort of like giving everybody the same amount of food. Equity is like, give the most food to someone who's hungry and some doesn't need food, like, they don't need food. Basically, that's the concept of equity, and of course justice is, when someone has been wronged, moving towards a way for that person to receive peace.

And there's different types [of justice]. Usually, we're trying to do restorative justice, restoring people into a place that is, hopefully, better than where they were. So, with those sorts of definitions in mind, I think when it comes to an institution that often is silent on these issues, I mean I don't know, raise your hand if your institution isn't, honestly. I'd like to know so I can go there. But, jokes aside, I think that what that looks like equity-wise is, like Micah was saying earlier, getting to know your tutors

individually. Oftentimes, I mean, you know, in the writing center, we do work, you know. We do labor. We are working with one another. And for anyone who's ever had a job, you clock in, you clock out, and then you go on your merry way. You can feel like a cog in a machine, almost. Writing centers are usually more cozy than that, and that's why I really love my work, but I think valuing each other as individuals with hopes, dreams, desires, and needs, I think, is where you find the beginnings of what equity and justice looks like. Because when it comes to that equity and justice, you need to pay attention to individuals and what they need. So, I'm not sure what that looks like from a center-to-center basis, but I think being conscious of the different places tutors might be in, even a day-to-day basis (such as through check-ins, honestly), is where we can start to get our bearings on how to actually make sure our tutors are treated well in these spaces in that direction.

Chanara: To answer this question and just brag on my center a little bit, creating a community within the writing center is so important so you feel supported and, as Genevieve said, like you're honoring this person and what they need at that time. What we were in-person, it was amazing. I loved being in the writing center; I would hang out there when I wasn't working and it was a great time. But just having people who support you makes all the difference. I had a really weird experience with this student and, as it escalated, another consultant came and intercepted that. On the admin end, that person couldn't make appointments with me anymore, and wasn't permitted to schedule appointments with anyone until they sat down and talked through what happened with someone on our admin team. Having that kind of community helps. Understand that we're all people and we all need help sometimes and if there's a way that I can intercede for you and do that, I will.

Micah: I'll just add on. Here, I think again like one main things is that we like thinking on like that individual as well as the institution. Concerning the individual, I think it's important to educate oneself. I've known plenty of tutors who have went out their way already to learn more about antiracism through books like *Stamped From the Beginning*, *How to be an Antiracist*, *Bad Feminist*, *Eloquent Rage*. They have gone and found this scholarship for themselves, which alleviates the amount of emotional labor on Black tutors. Because sometimes, it feels like, "Ok,

like because you're black, you must know a lot about fighting racism and stuff." But it's like, "Hold up, no. I'm still learning, too." Nevertheless, if we want a better writing center, we must try to be the best scholar-activists or scholar-advocates we can be. The more we read from others' experiences and then try to apply them in the context of the writing center, the more we can have conversations that are more nuanced and collaborative.

In terms of the institutional level, I know we've been talking a lot about the writing center from the inside. But changing the negative aspects of academia is a lot of work, especially for a writing center. We act as both our own institutions for learning, but in many cases, the writing center is also an appendage of the English Department. So, in some manner, the way in which we tutor people reflects what English departments want in their courses. I believe to make institutional change, we should partner in allyship with other organizations on campus who also strive for diversity and inclusion in academia. Writing centers could host workshops, set and/or follow initiatives with fellow organizations, and other things like that to connect efforts for diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. If we have efforts of diversity and inclusion not only within the writing center but also outside, we have better hopes to create substantial change.

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Talisha (Audience Question): How do we acknowledge, respond to, or recognize moments of explicit violence and microaggressions that occur in the teaching of writing between faculty and writers while respecting privacy and honoring trust?

I don't know if any of you have experienced that, as tutors, something you would consider violence, in the comments or feedback from teachers or a student has told you about an interaction with a faculty member.

Genny: So, I'd like to respond to this by actually referring to a comment that was made earlier. But when it comes to interacting and responding to the sort of situations that can happen, whether explicit or through microaggressions (which are still not very good), I think we need to refer

those individuals outside of the consultation that happens. This is sort of where you get caught up in between "calling someone out" versus "calling someone in." So, when you call someone out, oftentimes people feel alienated or confused and immediately go on the defensive. But calling somebody in is saying, "Hey...I think that you don't really have a full understanding of this." And while ignorance is not really a defense, it is something that can be addressed.

I think a lot of universities have, especially in the wake of things people have tried to accomplish, different resources to address these people. Now, of course, sometimes there are social injustices that occur, and so disciplinary action will need to be taken. Of course, with honoring the trust of the clients and such, I think it goes both ways. Because we've been talking about tutors as the ones who need to be protected, and that's very true. But this is also why we need to specifically make sure that tutors, consultants, professional consultants, and anyone on staff is trained to handle these situations, how to diffuse, as well as how to treat clients with respect. And again, I think honoring that is making sure it goes both ways. Much like Micah said earlier, just because I'm a black person, that doesn't mean that I'm a race scholar. And we all have so much to learn. I think making sure that it goes both ways and people have an out is a way for people to feel comfortable when they are in.

Micah: I agree, Genny. And that is a difficult question. Even the fact of looking through my appointments, I have had a couple moments where I've had to double check, especially with e-tutoring appointments, and I'm like, "Wow, does this sound like an experiences stemming from a microaggression between student and a peer grader, or even between a student and a faculty member?" As it comes to questionable comments, I've personally seen it most between other students when they peer grade each other in their courses, and the student sends me those comments.
So, it leads to this challenge. I think it's best to of course think about the student, but to also make sure that they want to confront those issues to begin with. Like seeing if you can potentially help them out and refer them. Protocols are important as well so that as tutors, we know exactly what we need to do in certain situations like these. I know there are Titles at most colleges that protect students against discrimination. But again, it's about developing that trust so that the student feels comfortable with

handling (or not handling) the situation with or without your help. But yeah, that is a very difficult, but good, question.

Talisha: I will say that at my previous institution, there was a student who was dealing with a professor, and it got elevated not to the Provost but to someone in the Provost's office who worked with diversity and inclusion. Eventually, someone called me in to work with a student who was being called in every week and singled out for writing support. This was a black female student. And so I met with that student, and she was very clear that she did not want me to intervene with the professor who was making her feel terrible to the point that she was planning to just flunk the class and not try to complete the assigned project. But I was able to work with her through my role in the writing center to create a plan to get her paper done so that she could pass the class. But that's the point about privacy and honoring the student: it's about what they want. They may not want that further intervention. They just may want to just get through and try to move on. So, it's important to ask what they want, and if necessary, bring it up to the director so that the director can intervene with the faculty member or bring it up to whoever that faculty member's supervisor is. As a tutor, it wouldn't be your goal to contact the professor or intervene in any way.

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Chanara (Audience Question): How do we affirm the stories of those who may not speak English as a first language?

Micah: This is a great question because a lot of courses use American Standard English as the default. At UAB, we have a really diverse community that has a lot of non-native speakers of English. Their biggest challenge tends to be along the lines of grammar and with understanding enough vocabulary of the language to write their papers. However, a lot of students I've worked with so far actually excel in English as a second language. I haven't had too many experiences in which a non-native speaker of English was struggling, and if so, it has nothing to do with their intelligence or ability. One thing I do to help affirm the stories of those who are multilingual is to promote them to push the boundaries,

especially in personal narratives, and incorporate their native language in their essays *a la* Gloria Anzaldúa.

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Talisha (Audience Question): If you have knowledge that the writer's first language is not English, how do you create a safe space for them to express their ideas?

Micah: Okay, that might be an easier question to tackle. So, as it comes to creating safe spaces, I think the first thing to talk about (like we did when talking about safe spaces for Black students and tutors) is in creating trust within that session. Get to know them a little bit so that you can make them feel as comfortable as possible. The tutoring process can be a vulnerable experience, and even more so if English is not a writer's strong suit. With any opportunity you can, encourage them for their successes in the language and just for working with you in a vulnerable learning moment.

I think another thing that will help create a safe space for these writers is learning how their cultures work and how they write papers in their language. This is something I need to work and improve on as a tutor. Again, we are taught this certain habitus of writing, but we don't really think about how people from different countries write their papers, particularly as it comes to the flow of arguments or citations, formatting, and things of that nature. And so, I think that talking about their culture with them, if it's okay for that student, can create a space in which both student and tutor safely educate one another. This experience can also allow them the creative freedom to express their ideas better for us tutors to help them develop their own unique writing style rather than one narrow mode. Luckily, at UAB, professors tend to be accepting of different writing styles, and even encourage that in their courses.

Chanara: I am super interested in this question -- which is why it was stuck in my brain -- because my first month of tutoring was so scary because I convinced myself that I had no idea what I was doing. But I had a student come in and her first language *was* English but she did not have the language to express her ideas and this super cool thing

happened that I told everybody about for at least a month. I had 3 pieces of paper -- I still have the picture in my phone -- and we drew what she was talking about. She sketched it out explaining, "I'm just trying to talk about how the character goes from this to this." So as she drew pictures, I wrote words, and it turned out to be the most cohesive idea that I had ever been presented. She just needed help developing the actual words to get there. So I think that kind of meaning someone where they are is valuable. I've had students whose first language isn't English and while working on a narrative assignment for their 1101 class, they want to explain a place or thing in their hometown but will say, "I don't know what it's called in English," to which I respond, "Okay, well just tell me what it looks like." It helps to get down to those very basic details and then build on that. It's like Legos.

Micah: As a side note to what Chanara brilliantly said, the Whiteboard is a particularly good feature on Zoom to draw things out.

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Talisha (Audience Question): Well that's a great transition because our next question is about how you've experienced tutoring when your body and the writer's body are not in the same space, so maybe using the technology or in any way, just as an embodied person?

Chanara: I do all asynchronous appointments now, which requires a lot more work than it used to when I did half in-person and half asynchronous. I find myself working overtime to compensate for the feeling that students are missing out something. I want to address every single thing in each paper and every question they have and every question they *might* have based on my feedback. So I do that and then at least once every other week, someone will e-mail me a follow-up question seeking clarity where I thought I'd been so clear. So I've become much more intentional about feedback and also varying the ways I present feedback. Instead of just saying, "You need to vary your sentence structure," or, "This is unclear," I ask more probing questions. I also provide example answers to these questions. For example, if I ask, "What did you mean by X?" I will follow that with "If you meant A, you might want to think about doing B. If you meant Y, you should consider

presenting it in Z way." So going the extra mile but moderating that within the time that you have. It's been…it's been good. It's been hard, I'm not going to lie. This whole situation has been hard on everybody.

Genny: I also did tutoring last summer—and you know, it was all remote—and I actually saw a lot of the same clients. Usually during like spring and fall semesters, I never see the same person more than twice. But I had a lot of returners, and I got to know them kinda well. So, I made a couple of friends, which was cool. But I will also say to the question of how I've experienced tutoring with our bodies not sharing the same space, I think, unfortunately, boundaries aren't as clear as we're all still trying to figure out, like how to like, you know, be virtual still. I'm not going to lie; some of my clients got a little bold, stating things like, "Your hair looks different today." And I'm like, it's fine...allegedly. That's *fine*. But then they'll ask questions like "how do you do this" and that's when it's like, "Well, now we are straying a little bit from the point of consultation." Because I think when you're in a in a dedicated space like a writing center, the intention is very clear of what's happening.

But when you're in your room and doing a consultation, people can feel more comfortable. For the most part, we all feel very comfortable in our writing center space, but there is an air of professionalism that is maintained for the usual safety and respect of one another, and I think that got a little lost at least earlier on. And I'm sure there's probably different situations as people got more accustomed to doing that, but this was in the summer only after we just had started online tutoring. So, when it comes to like addressing that, it probably just needs a reinforcement of like, "Hey, I know we're virtual, but you know, just make sure we stay on topic, please," and stuff like that.

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Talisha: We have about five more minutes, and we don't have any more questions, so this is a good time for any of you to share your final thoughts or recommendations for other tutors (student, faculty, professional) or writing center administrators.

Chanara: I would just like to say, for one, thank you for having me. Thank you all for being so engaged in our responses and for pushing us to think further. Some of these questions were really hard, and it's nice to have a community of people who are invested in doing the work to make our spaces better. I think that what writing centers do is exploited and undervalued, honestly, so this work is so important. We have to affirm each other and continue to have these conversations.

Genny: I am also so grateful and thankful for each and every one of you for coming out to this. This is definitely the highlight of my week. It has brought me a lot of joy myself. I honestly also want to say that like, I don't know if anyone else ever got this experience coming in the writing center community, but I didn't expect it to be as introspective and ready to change and shift as I thought upon entry. You know people have different workplaces and such, and so I want to say that it's always so refreshing to have conversations with people who are involved in this work because I think that we have a unique desire to grow and shift as we understand how language grows and shifts. So, it's always a beautiful thing to see. Having a conversation with y'all, albeit virtual, has been very fruitful, and I am so thankful to be here as a panelist. Thank you so much.

Micah: I would like to say thank you as well, especially with being a younger tutor. Like wow! Even as a panelist, I've learned so much. And I've also learned things that I need to work on as a tutor, which is a good thing. This is an opportunity for all of us to grow—black tutors, tutors of color, and white tutors alike. So having this important conversation helps to push the boundaries to help us educate and figure out what's next for us. Again, thank you all for having me.

Adara: Just to piggyback off of everyone, thank you all for having me and allowing me to share my experiences with y'all. We should continue to always have these conversations in order to bridge the gap between our experiences and others, for where we'll have the most change is when we start identifying that we have important work to do and that we need to come together to make that change.

Talisha (closing): Thanks to all the panelists and everyone else who put this together. Thanks for inviting me to be part of it.

Conclusion: LaKela

There were many successes from the keynote panel during the 2021 SWCA Conference. It was valuable having students' voices featured on a large scale, as writing center professionals are the individuals often featured. The students of color shared unique and collective experiences that provided insight beyond discussions about our student staff. Their perspectives challenged us as an organization to move beyond words and reactions and put in the work we say we're doing to support students of color in our writing center spaces. The keynote panel also reminded us that we need to engage in consistent dialogue with students of color to learn how to best support their needs, acknowledging that students' identities and backgrounds vary. This way, we are proactive instead of reactionary.

As we consider the ways that the panel benefited students and the organization, it is also important to acknowledge the growth we still need to do. There are ways that we can involve our students in the professional organization more. Their contributions to organizing and planning are vital, especially for students interested in future writing center work. Perhaps working with us on future conference ideas, CFP planning, and delivery are some ways we can incorporate their feedback and ensure we are honoring their voices on a consistent basis. As much as writing center professionals serve as models for students, students also serve as models for writing professionals. That means that we recognize that their experiences are rooted in a variety of interactions--positive, negative, and the indescribable.

The transparency and vulnerability of the student panelists led to necessary dialogue in and outside of the keynote session. Through this panel, Dr. Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison and the student panelists reminded us that our work as an organization is ongoing. The dialogue was vital for future work and served as a great example of how we may imagine future panels and groups we hope to engage more.

Course-Embedded Consulting and Writing Centers: Collaboration, Creativity, and Sustaining Community in a Time of Crisis[1]

Scott Whiddon and Russell Carpenter

SCOTT: As Jennifer noted, my name is Scott Whiddon. I serve as Writing Center director as well as Program Director for our Writing, Rhetoric, and Communication major at Transylvania University in Lexington, KY. We're a traditional and mostly residential liberal arts college with about 1,000 students. I've been collaborating with Rusty for over a decade now—mostly via our work in the Southeastern Writing Center Association, and often via our interests in initiatives such as Course-Embedded Tutoring. Rusty serves as Assistant Provost and Professor of English at Eastern Kentucky University, a regional comprehensive university with about 14,000 students, located in Richmond, KY.

In the time we have today, we'll be talking about our respective Course-embedded programs, and what we've learned over the course of several collaborative research projects. We'll draw on projects we've done together, but also with our friends Kevin Dvorak, Julia Bleakney, Paula Rosinski, and Courtnie Morin. Perhaps writing center work is always, and thankfully so, a team sport. We'll also talk about collaboration and what such a term, writ large, might mean in a time of crisis.

But, first things first: thank you, and thanks to South Central Writing Center Association, for spending time with us today; given the stresses and challenges of our current moment, it is a joy to know that so many people are working hard—and, working together, in a variety of ways—to support and sustain college cultures of writing.

[1] Editors' Note: This article is derived from a presentation by Whiddon and Carpenter at the 2021 South Central Writing Center Association Conference. It contains not only the transcript of the presentation but images and texts from the PowerPoint slides used in the presentation.

Although many college writing centers have taken on course-embedded programming—often referred to as "writing fellows" or "writing associates" programs—the term might seem somewhat unfamiliar to some. On many campuses, classroom and writing center geographies are seen as distinct, situating teaching and tutoring within different pedagogical landscapes. Classrooms are often viewed as the spaces where writing instruction takes place, while writing centers are spaces where writers receive *assistance*, not instruction. Course-embedded tutoring programs attempt to bridge these distinct locations and, when done well, transport the intellectual work of the writing center to the classroom space by assigning select tutors to select classes. As course-embedded tutors navigate classroom environments, they develop relationships—the forging of a "diplomatic partnership between the center and the instructors" as Teagan Decker explains (18):

> On many campuses, classroom and writing center geographies are seen as distinct, situating teaching and tutoring within different pedagogical landscapes. Classrooms are often viewed as the spaces where writing instruction takes place, while writing centers are spaces where writers receive assistance, not instruction. **Course-embedded tutoring programs attempt to bridge these distinct locations** and, when done well, transport **the intellectual work of the writing center to the classroom space** by assigning select tutors to select classes.

Fig. 1. Decker Quotation

Such initiatives can happen in a number of ways, and there are a variety of schemas for organizing the day to day labor of a course-embedded program (for a single section, for a set of classes, or even for a large-scale initiative, in Rusty's case). Some programs require students from a selected class to work with a staffer or staffers on all tasks; other programs highlight specific course tasks for collaboration. Some programs require staffers to attend their respective classes; others attend on specifically selected days, determined in advance. It could be argued that many of the skill sets of course-embedded work are close kin to the work that staffers already do; Hall and Hughes note that similar to generalist "writing center tutors, [CECs] learn how to ask smart

questions of student writers, how to listen carefully, and how to structure a dialogue to help a student rethink and revise a paper" (31).

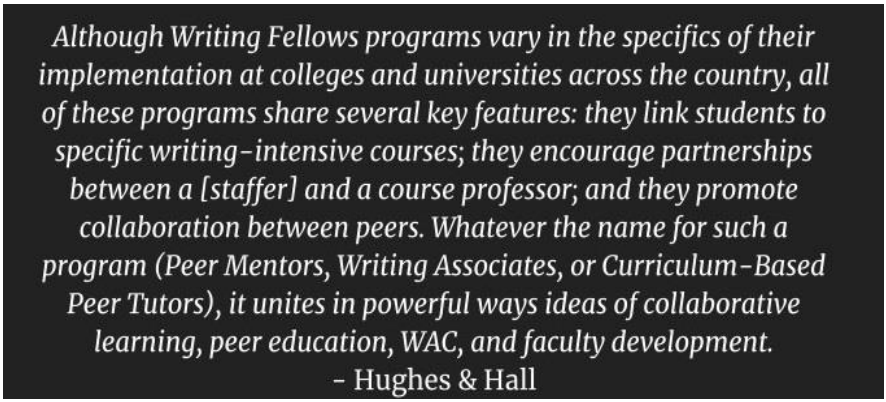

Fig. 2. Hughes and Hall Quotation

Hall and Hughes also explain that CECs might be required to conduct conferences on papers they've commented on extensively. In the end, what separates course embedded programming from more typical one-off sessions might be described as "sustained intentionality."

Fig. 3. A New Term

In addition to working one-to-one with students, course-embedded tutors often navigate the teacher's territory. Course-embedded tutors often meet with faculty at the beginning of a semester to discuss course outcomes and syllabi, and then during the semester to review assignments and student progress, forming an ongoing partnership with faculty members. In some programs—often, depending on funding—they sometimes engage in teaching activities by conducting workshops, forming peer-response groups, and providing individual conferences during class time. Along the way, Carol Severino and Megan Knight contend that course-embedded tutors also serve as "ambassadors" for their writing centers or for the tutorials that take place in those spaces. As noted by Hughes and Hall: "Although Writing Fellows programs vary in the specifics of their implementation at colleges and universities

across the country, all of these programs share several key features: they link students to specific writing-intensive courses; they encourage partnerships between a [staffer] and a course professor; and they promote collaboration between peers. Whatever the name for such a program (Peer Mentors, Writing Associates, or Curriculum-Based Peer Tutors), it unites in powerful ways ideas of collaborative learning, peer education, Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), and faculty development."

And to be honest, all of my work with Rusty and others when it comes to Course Embedded Peer Writing Consultation and writing centers started via an informal conversation at the SWCA conference in North Carolina, hosted by East Carolina University. At the time, I had been a director for a few years. I had slowly become active in both regional and national organizations, and our writing center was starting to develop a new identity on campus. What was once a site that was specifically seen as a space for remediation—in a former walk-in closet, no doubt—was now beginning to be seen as a site for all student writers, regardless of ability. I had revamped our staffer training as a credit-bearing, faculty approved course in pedagogy; I had taken on a variety of public relations campaigns, all with staffers at the helm, to try and help revise how we were seen by students, faculty, and administrators. All of this happened within a period of significant change at my institution: all in all, I've served under five presidents and seven deans in fifteen years total.

Fig. 4. Ongoing Writing Center Discussions

As many of you know well, change is slow on college campuses, and especially at small liberal arts colleges. Furthermore, much of the work of college writing centers is somewhat evangelical: convincing others of the value of what we do and how such labor plays into the values of both individual student needs and the institution as a whole. As we prepared to move into a new space in the library, I wondered: how could I develop a program that helped faculty and students alike see, first hand, the great work that happens when writers talk about writing in sanctioned spaces? How could I build upon what I was learning via scholarship about course-embedded work in a way that fit a small-college culture?

RUSTY: While Transylvania University's program is designed for a small liberal arts college environment, Eastern Kentucky University's Course-Embedded Consultant (CEC) program, housed within the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity's Writing & Communication Program, is a critical component of the first-year experience for student learners arriving at the University who are below academic benchmarks. In designing the program, we were focused on having consultants contribute to the culture of writing inside the classroom while encouraging active, peer-to-peer writing relationships that bridge classroom and writing center.

At EKU, we realized how critical our first-year writing courses were and that performance in this course is an indicator of a student's potential for success at the University. With that in mind, the University focused on how we might build on what we were already doing. The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity already offered one-on-one and small-group consultations for undergraduate and graduate students, but the CEC program allowed us to increase the frequency with which students receive feedback. At EKU, CECs are embedded in each four-credit-hour reading-intensive, co-requisite first-year writing course. CECs model productive academic strategies—including writing, critical reading, metacognition, learning, and academic engagement—for students inside the classroom and through individual consultations in the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity. CECs are critical—a strategic investment—in the University's efforts to offer a high-quality learning experience for first-year writers, to support students in establishing successful patterns and practices as they enter the University.

Given the impact course-embedded programs have had on our two different campuses, we now would like to highlight some of the key things we've learned in designing and implementing these initiatives. These projects span about seven years and represent priorities for the ways writing instruction and enhancement are designed at our respective institutions (a small traditional liberal arts college; a regional comprehensive university with graduate students): Our most recent publication, with colleagues at Elon University in North Carolina, and Nova Southeastern University in Florida, was featured in a 2020 issue of *WLN* and examines CEC and faculty perceptions of the benefits of course-embedded writing consultant programs; we learned that such benefits can, and often do, transcend institutional type and mission. With the same colleagues at these two institutions, we applied the students as partners model for teaching and learning as a way to better understand how programs are designed and operate. In 2015, Scott and I completed a close review of faculty narratives and what they helped us understand about our CEC programs:

Fig. 5. Examples of Collaborative CEC Research

With Kevin Dvorak, we guest edited the 2014 issue of *Praxis*, focused on course-embedded writing support programs around the country; this

collection of essays showcased a range of voices, including community colleges and HBCUs. We have also fostered dialogue among major writing center venues throughout the country and region such as multiple International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) and Southeastern Writing Center Association (SWCA) presentations, posters, and workshops, along with the productive and inspiring conversations that have taken place in our own state (in our case, via SWCA-Kentucky, where our programs are both involved). The input and feedback from our writing center colleagues have led to new ways of thinking, new collaborations, and new scholarly networks to form that have shaped our collective understanding of CEC programs. We see this new understanding of course embedded work in three parts: benefits for staffers, benefits for students, and benefits for faculty.

SCOTT: Perhaps one of the most surprising advantages of CEC programming, even on a small scale, is how it impacts the educational experiences of the staffers themselves. CEC programming builds upon many of the reasons that students tend to apply to small colleges such as Transylvania: the potential for close collaboration, leadership opportunities, and potential for significant undergraduate research. My work with Rusty—as well as other WCDs at four total institutions—suggests that such rewards, when thoughtfully implemented and understood across stakeholders, transfer across institutional types. Given the extended nature of CEC programming, with sustained and intentional contact with select students in ways that are different than a more typical one-off session, staffers get a crash course in what it means to support student writers. Such programming also allows staffers to potentially develop even stronger identities as tutors, as writers, and even as researchers.

I was pleased when several of my brand-new staffers asked to be part of our current initiative—even with the challenges that come with distance learning and online support at a college that brands itself on the in-person experience. Some of these student/staffers recently presented their reflections on their CEC experience at the SWCA conference in February—drawing upon both student surveys as well as interviews with participating faculty and previous CEC-led research projects; Kate McMahon (in her 2018 piece from *Southern Discourse in the Center*)

provides rich descriptions of how staffers were able to make connections between their own CEC experiences and their growth as writers and leader. McMahon also offers wonderful advice for faculty taking on CEC programming via her participant/observation perspective. More recently, my staffer Emma Masur developed not only a significant literature review of sources that trace the growth of CEC programs, but also showed how her work with a mid-level course helped students develop better facility with multimodal writing and podcasting; I was incredibly proud when she was selected as an invited and featured speaker at the Pedagogicon conference this past May.

To be sure, CEC programming, and CEC student research, requires significant maturity and time management from staffers. However, studies such as Hughes et al.'s Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research, published in *Writing Center Journal* in 2010, show how peer tutoring—especially peer tutoring in writing/communication—might emblematize the values of liberal education—playing into community leadership roles, maturity in personal relationships, and even career advancement long after graduation.

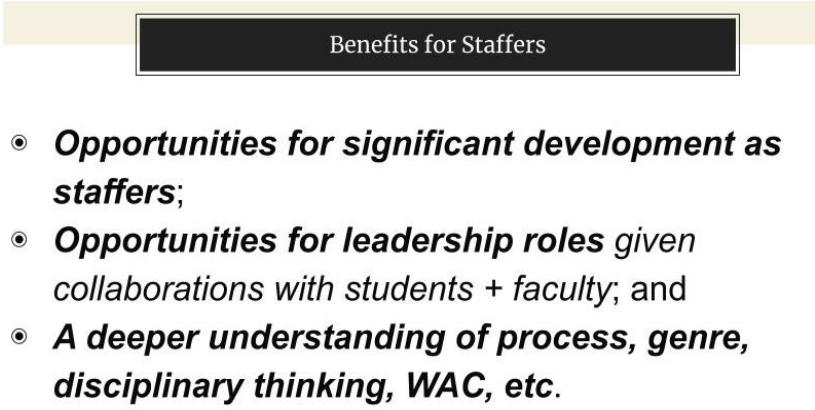

Fig. 6. Benefits for Staffers

RUSTY: Perhaps most important to our role as educators, we have observed, via work in our own programs, that CECs benefit *student development* as well, by providing them with enhanced planning, revising, and writing skills. As Kevin Dvorak et al. explain, embedded tutoring helps students achieve first-year composition course learning

outcomes. Equally important for student development, Dvorak and the team at Nova report that students learned the value of working with another person on their writing (n.p.), in addition to specific and related skills, such as grammar, punctuation, clarity, and citation formatting (APA or MLA).

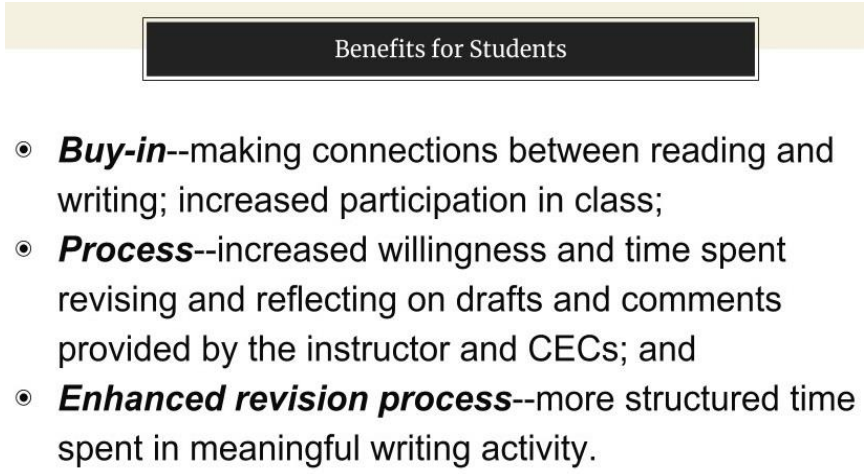

Fig. 7. Benefits for Students

Other students reported learning "brainstorming techniques," "comma and tense use," and how to understand different assignments and, in some instances, "structure and organization," "word choice," "proofreading," "transitions," and "how to write an introduction and conclusion" (n.p). Profoundly, students also reported "learning about themselves as writers" (n.p.).

In a similar manner, Dara Rossman Regaignon and Pam Bromley also find that "working with the writing fellows [or course-embedded consultants] multiple times over the course of the semester results in a positive and measurable difference in students' writing" (48). As CECs are able to model effective writing practices inside and outside of the classroom, Regaignon and Bromley suggest the importance of CEC program configuration.

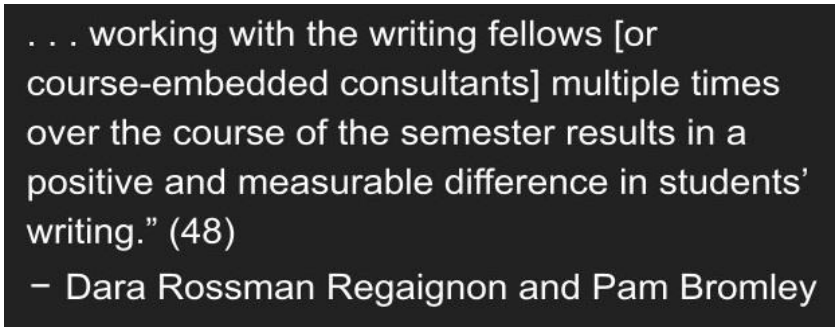

Fig. 8. Regaignon and Bromley Quotation

Through these designs, they recognize the benefits to student development from the structured interactions of placing them in one course directly paired with a single, designated CEC throughout the duration of a semester. CECs meet with students weekly inside and outside of the classroom, which helps them build trust and rapport.

Working directly with the CECs over the course of the semester allows students to become more aware writers. Students and CECs form learning-based partnerships during their early experiences on campus. At EKU, we have observed that CECs significantly and positively influence learning during the first-year writing experience. Early engagement in this intensive, structured design promotes connection to the institution, pride in academic effort and success, and value as scaled to the larger context of the university.

Students learn and model behaviors alongside the CECs in the classroom, while CECs also connect students to learning cultures prominent in the writing center. CECs also establish valuable academic partnerships, as we discussed in "Effectively Integrating Course-Embedded Consultants using the [Students as Partners] SaP Model," which are built on respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (Dvorak, Bleakney, Rosinski, and Carpenter). The CEC and students gain respect for one another through ongoing interactions throughout the semester. By communicating with one another regularly, students also see the writing process as reciprocal; that is, CECs and students each give input and learn from one another. Both CECs and students share responsibility in the writing process.

As we found in one of our earliest collaborations, experienced writing instructors from EKU and Transylvania University recognized the ways in which students in their classes saw *value* in their CECs, via evidence of:

- Buy-in—making connections between reading and writing; increased participation in class;
- Process—increased willingness and time spent revising and reflecting on drafts and comments provided by the instructor and CECs; and
- Enhanced revision process—more structured time spent in meaningful writing activity.

While much of the focus of our previous research has been on staffer and student benefits, we've also observed enhancements to innovative teaching and learning.

From the faculty perspective, CECs add value to the pedagogical process of teaching writing. Having CECs modeling writing and commenting processes alongside students both in the classroom and within the space of the writing center allows the faculty to make connections between intellectual work that happens in the structured space of the classroom—writing, reflection, and modeling—and those practices that are formed outside of the classroom—structured and dedicated writing time, focused revision, intentional reflection and metacognition. Placing CECs in an authority position within the classroom (that is, allowing them time to offer interactive workshops and whole-class feedback to students focused on writing and writing process) suggests the prominence of their positioning within the teaching and learning design and relationship with the faculty member.

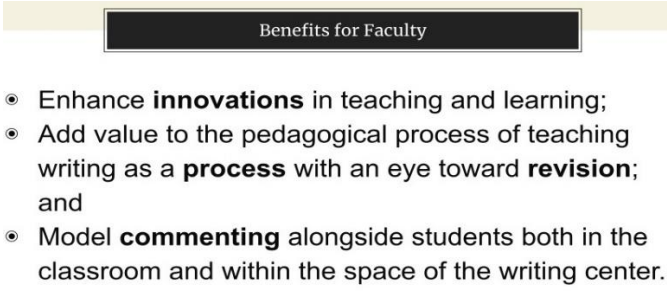

Fig. 9. Benefits for Faculty

Faculty members reported that working with CECs allows for students to connect consistently to course goals, as Scott and I found (Carpenter and Whiddon). In addition, faculty members in EKU's program reported seeing a difference in the writing as the student worked with a CEC. Similarly, EKU instructors have reflected on ways in which the CECs promote engaging pedagogy, including through interactions with students, noting that the increased contact hours increase the energy level inside and outside of the classroom, resulting in a more collaborative approach to writing and writing processes. Faculty and CEC collaborations highlight the importance of developing a *process-centered, writing-oriented pedagogy (teaching and learning).* Working side-by-side (as partners) with CECs and planning interactive opportunities to co-facilitate classroom writing and revision experiences refocuses attention on important course goals and ways in which programs can help students become successful writers while also envisioning what these initiatives can become in the future.

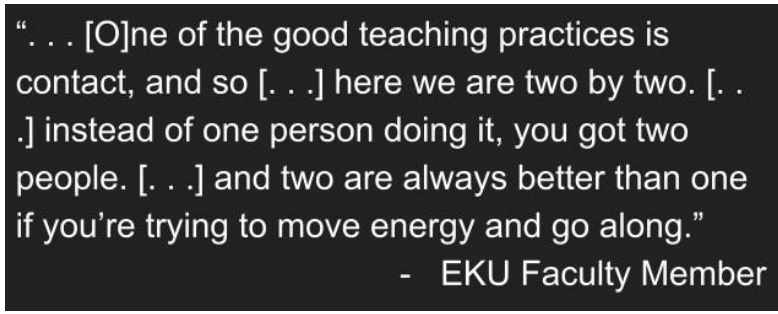

Fig. 10. Faculty Testimonial

SCOTT: Writing centers—and those with aspirations of designing similar course-embedded programs at their institutions—might consider several threads that we see running through our experiences with CECs:

I. While all writing centers can benefit from collaboration, it is central to the design of course-embedded writing support programs. Although EKU and Transy's implementation of embedding consultants in courses might look different, and they are, both have benefited from highly collaborative designs that place collaboration at the heart of their programs. Collaborations involve the

CECs, writing centers, faculty, and the students enrolled in the course.

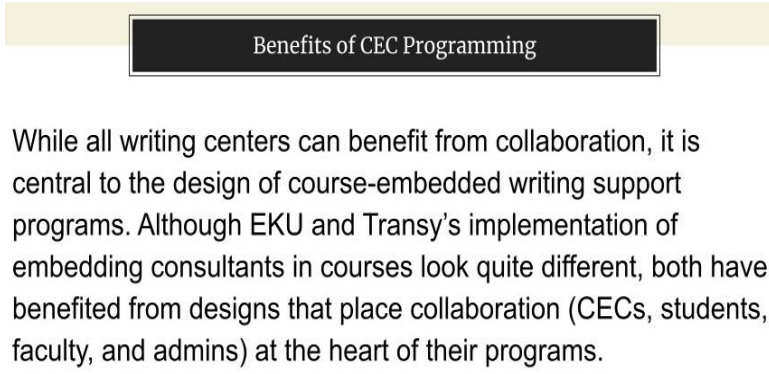

Fig. 11. Benefits of CEC Programming I

II. Embedded writing support programs allow us to rethink the ways writing centers support students. Focused on sustainability, that is ongoing coordination with students to learn their writing, reading, and learning abilities and patterns over the course of the semester, promotes a broader understanding of the student (and a more holistic approach) to support.

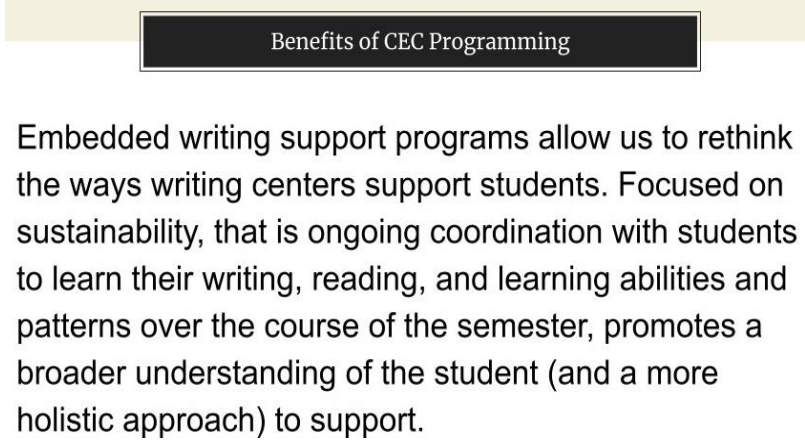

Fig. 12. Benefits of CEC Programming II

III. Course-embedded writing support allows writing centers to extend their networks beyond the activities that happen within the walls of the writing center space. That is, they allow writing centers to expand their reach and diversify services to support student writing. Students experience the writing center through interactions that take place within the classroom, and these experiences transfer back to interactions within the writing center itself. Such work also helps promote writing center work across campus—often reaching audiences we never imagined.

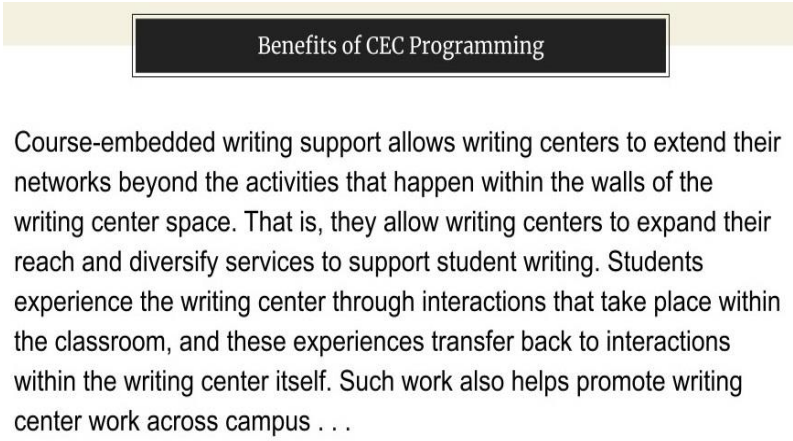

Fig. 13. Benefits of CEC Programming III

But, where are we now, given the challenges of hybrid and distanced classes and the stresses of a global pandemic? To be sure, I didn't intend to take on another wave of CEC work this past Spring, when COVID first hit. But in our summer workshop for faculty teaching in our required first year seminar program, held online, many faculty members asked about additional ways to support students given distance, given stresses, and given the challenges of a compressed semester (as we went from a 14 week semester schedule to a series of 7 week modules). In Fall 2020, TUWC supported 7 sections of first year seminars with CEC programming (2 staffers per section, working with about 8-9 students each); we also supported an Introduction to the major class for our WRC program (17 students).

At various points in the term, we surveyed all students enrolled in these courses specifically about stress and how CECs helped provide support—as something akin to lifeguards or personal trainers for writing. Here's a few data points: 87% of surveyed students noted that their assigned CEC had a positive impact on their drafting/revision process; 76% noted that working with a CEC helped reduce or negotiate stress in a difficult time; 92% of the students who took a CEC-enhanced course in Module 2 said that they would encourage peers to take a CEC-enhanced course in Module 3 or in Winter Term. Currently, in our Winter modules, TUWC is supporting 8 out of 16 sections of first year research seminar classes via course-embedded programming. Although small liberal arts colleges are mostly known for their emphasis on in-person experiences and small group learning, our shift to online peer writing support—especially in our CEC sections—has gone exceptionally smooth: a testament to the ability of our staffers and participating faculty members.

RUSTY: While EKU has largely moved to hybrid and online instruction amid precautions due to the pandemic, CEC work has continued to focus on supporting students and faculty in the first-year, reading-intensive co-requisite courses. The CEC program has continued to support the first-year writing students across 42 sections. All instruction takes place virtually, but students have more options for collaborating individually with their CEC; that is, they can choose the delivery and design that best works for them that day. The pandemic has prompted a number of changes at the institution, and the CEC program has been responsive by following a flexible approach. Students can choose synchronous online consultations (when bandwidth, access, and schedules allow) or asynchronous consultations (when time, health conditions, or personal circumstances warrant it).

This design fits students' schedules in the moment and allows for flexibility in scheduling. The process of "pivoting" as we have called the shift to flexible course design and delivery has also allowed our program to explore "new" and even "innovative" ways of supporting students, providing structure to important writing processes amid challenges, and allowing students to choose approaches that best fit them. While the conditions in which the CEC program was revised and re-envisioned

were challenging, and the pandemic continued to necessitate change, our designs and decisions demanded even more collaboration and partnership than previous, on-ground models.

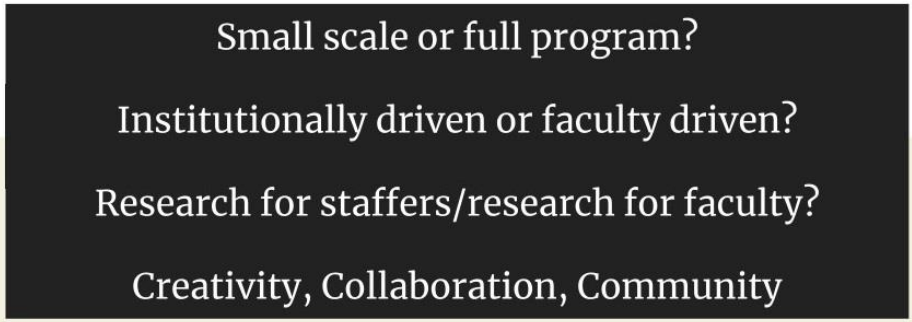

Fig. 14. CEC Applications

Scott: In closing, we hope that y'all can see that CEC work can do a number of things for a wide range of writing centers and campus cultures of writing. CEC work can be small scale, like Transy's, or it can support a whole program, like EKU's. It can be institutionally driven, but faculty-fueled. It can provide avenues for research—especially for WC directors who need to generate data from the work that they're already doing, or for staffers who want to take their first steps into disciplinary writing in rhetoric/composition or related fields of study.

To be sure, CEC work isn't a panacea—a cure all for all things writing—especially in a moment in which all seems so uncertain from moment to moment, for individuals and programs alike. CEC work adds labor—for faculty, WC administrators, and staffers. We recognize our respective privilege in such moments as tenured professors/administrators. That said, the two of us—with our different backgrounds, different programs, and different student populations—have been able to sustain work that is creative, collaborative, and community-driven, even in the midst of an ever-changing educational landscape. We look forward to seeing what comes next. Thanks.

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Book Review

Lawrence, Susan, and Terry Myers Zawacki. *Re/Writing the Center: Approaches to Supporting Graduate Students in the Writing Center*. Utah State University Press, 2018.

ISBN: 978-1-60732-750-9
Pages: 270
Price: $34.95

Brittny Byrom

Writing centers consistently reconsider the ways in which our practices and approaches to tutoring support student needs. One current need writing centers are reconsidering is how we meet—or fail to meet—the needs of advanced writers working on extended projects. The authors featured in Lawrence and Zawacki's edited collection *Re/Writing the Center: Approaches to Supporting Graduate Students in the Writing Center* unpack how the needs of graduate-level writers are fundamentally different from undergraduate-level writers. More specifically, the expectations and pressure experienced by graduate-level writers further complicate conversations about the identities and practices of writing centers as we try to meet their needs (9). The text advocates for graduate writing centers (GWC) that function outside generalist university writing centers to meet graduate-level writers' particular needs. This collection introduces readers to graduate-centered pedagogical practices and successful GWC initiatives led by writing center colleagues that serve as examples of the ways in which writing centers may support graduate writers.

Re/Writing the Center is comprised of a prologue, introduction, twelve chapters, and an epilogue. Each chapter, featuring different contributors,

is organized into three parts: Part I: Revising Our Core Assumptions, Part II: Reshaping Our Pedagogies and Practices, and Part III: Expanding the Center. The chapters in Part I highlight the differences between graduate and undergraduate writers and how traditional writing center practices center undergraduate students (17). Part II's chapters focus on writing center practices that center graduate-level writers (17). The chapters in Part III round out the conversations by explaining the benefits of providing graduate writing support and making connections with programs and offices that advocate for graduate students (17).

The text opens with a prologue by Paula Gillespie, who has worked with peer tutors since 1990 and has served as president of the International Writing Center Association. Gillespie sets the overall exhortative tone of the following chapters. She reflects on her experience with developing a graduate writing center at Marquette University in 2005 (4). Her narrative summarizes the work that went into the pilot program and contextualizes the hurdles that many GWC programs experience, such as loss of funds and administrative changes (5). Gillespie's prologue provides experienced insight into the benefits of GWC initiatives and how to navigate administrative partnerships.

Lawrence and Zawacki's introduction situates their positionality and addresses a key question: "how [is] the idea of a writing center is being reshaped in response to demands—institutional, faculty, student—to assist graduate student writers with high stakes thesis and dissertation projects" (7 & 17). Their general conclusion is that graduate-level writers need support unmet by traditional, generalist tutoring practices. The following chapters present how some writing centers are addressing these unmet needs. The introduction also provides the expected summation of each of the following chapters and explains the collection's thoughtful organization of revising, reshaping, and expanding current practices.

Part I of the collection contains four chapters that focus on recurring concerns such as altering writing center pedagogy, supporting multilingual students, and reconciling the peer/authority dichotomy within tutoring sessions. Each chapter situates their interests in teaching academic language and practices in GWCs.

This section begins with Michael Pemberton's "Rethinking the WAC/Writing Center/Graduate Studio Connection," in which he reflects and extends on his arguments made in his 1995 article "Rethinking the WAC/Writing Center Connection." His original article focused on generalist versus specialist writing center tutors. In this revision, he extends the discussion by identifying the different needs of graduate and undergraduate writers and provides suggestions on how to support graduate writers. By centering graduate writers and providing peer tutors to talk about writing, writing centers can potentially be critical players in the graduate educational experience (36-37).

Sarah Summers' "The Rise of the Graduate-Focused Writing Center: Exigencies and Responses" builds off Pemberton's urgent call for graduate writing support with the historical context of GWCs. She charts the rise of institutional interest for graduate-specific writing support over the last 20 years. This vested interest is reactionary to a "perceived crisis in education" (51). Summers contends that, although the "crisis" label has its own complexity, this interest and urging to create graduate writing support is an opportunity to develop sustainable programs to support grad students.

The following two chapters, authored by Steve Simpson and Joan Turner, respectively, provide an additional layer of discussion by centering the specific needs of multilingual graduate students. Both pieces argue for leaning into directive tutoring practices to create structure and scaffold larger projects. Additionally, both pieces ask readers to consider the expectations multilingual graduate students face when entering a field without similar linguistic background. Simpson suggests writing center admins perform routine surveys on graduate students and graduate faculty advisors about writing experiences and challenges to identify unmet needs (77). Turner emphasizes the benefits of discussing writing expectations with graduate supervisors by recognizing the importance interviewees place on micro-level concerns in graduate writing (96-97). By identifying expectations that graduate students face, especially multilingual students, writing center staff can better meet the needs of graduate student writers.

Part I, Reshaping Our Pedagogies and Practices, contains chapters five through eight, and these pieces discuss the application of writing center practices and the GWCs. This section begins with Patrick Lawrence, Molly Tetreault, and Tom Deans' essay "Intake and Orientation: The Role of Initial Writing Center Consultations for Graduate Students," which details their use of intake consultations to establish clear expectations between graduate students and writing center tutors. Although this "intake" practice may appear as a barrier to access, the participating graduate's feedback indicates ease of anxiety and an enhanced perception of professionalism within the writing center.

Hybrid consultation approaches are additional writing center practices that may benefit graduate students and suit the multiple modalities that writing centers provide. Elena Kallestinova's essay "Hybrid Consultations for Graduate Students: How Pre-Reading Can Help Address Graduate Student Needs" analyzes the data collected from the Graduate Writing Lab at Yale University, at which they implement a hybrid consultation style. This style includes students submitting their work early so that the tutor can read through the piece and make notes before the synchronous appointment. Focusing on user experience data, Kallestinova details the practicality for graduate students to submit their work ahead of time to allow tutors more time to read through and prep for the tutoring session.

The final two chapters of this section focus on genre-specific approaches to lead graduate students during writing appointments. Michelle Cox's chapter, "'Noticing' Language in The Writing Center: Preparing Writing Center Tutors to Support Graduate Multilingual Writers," adapts linguist Richard W Schmidt's theoretical framework of "noticing" for writing center pedagogy (146). This adaption of theory includes using example texts from the student's field of research to guide the local-level revision process. The call for directive tutoring approaches and expanding genre knowledge is echoed in Juliann Reineke, Mary Glavan, Doug Phillips, and Joanna Wolfe's chapter "'Novelty Moves': Training Tutors to Engage with Technical Content." This chapter encourages writing centers to train tutors about the various genres they may encounter within the writing center to better prepare tutors to support graduate writers.

Chapters nine through twelve comprise the final section, Part III, Expanding the Center. The chapters within the section center on how writing centers can better serve graduate students and how we can tailor writing support to align with their professional goals. In chapter nine, "A Change for the Better: Writing Center/WID Partnerships to Support Graduate Writing," writers Laura Brady, Nathalie Singh-Corcoran, and James Holsinger advise writing center admins to evaluate current processes through Organization Development theory—which pays attention to how and when change occurs (186). By applying the Organization Development lens, writing center administrators can analyze tutor and graduate writer concerns to implement beneficial changes.

Chapters ten and eleven focus on graduate students and writer identity and well-being. In "'Find Something You Know You Can Believe In': The Effect of Dissertation Retreats on Graduate Students' Identities as Writers," Ashly Bender Smith, Tika Lamsal, Adam Robinson, and Bronwyn T. Williams detail the benefits of writing retreats and workshops that focus on developing writer identity. Marilyn Gray, author of the chapter "More Than Dissertation Support: Aligning Our Programs with Doctoral Students' Well-Being and Professional Development Needs," extends the last chapter's conversation and identifies the connection between graduate student well-being and their academic progress. By providing workshops or writing retreats that focus on writing identity and well-being, writing centers attempt to meet graduate students where they are and support their needs.

In the final chapter, "Revisiting the Remedial Framework: How Writing Centers Can Better Serve Graduate Students and Themselves," Elizabeth Lenaghan argues that writing centers should pay careful attention to how writing centers connect with graduate faculty, promote our services throughout the campus, and communicate the dynamics and educational benefits of the writing process. Sherri Wynn Purdue's epilogue divvies up the labor of supporting graduate students that Lenaghan proposes by arguing for dissertation directors to seek training on guiding graduate student writing. Purdue advocates for dissertation directors to seek training and support from writing center staff to prepare themselves for

the work of directing graduate students through an advanced writing process.

Readers of the *Re/Writing the Center* edited collection will encounter compelling cases for the need for GWCs on college campuses. Directors and admins of university writing centers can benefit from the advice provided within this collection—especially the chapters within Part II and Part III—if they are considering creating a GWC or want to implement the strategies provided to better support their graduate students. Readers may be skeptical of the collection since the means of creating and maintaining specialized writing centers for graduate students is not generally accessible. However, the chapters within this collection provide specialized advice on expanding graduate services, which is valuable for writing centers that serve broader communities of student writers. Overall, this text is well designed and includes insightful articles that highlight the unique needs of graduate student writers and how writing centers can begin to address them.

Back to the Center

From Writing Lab to Writing Center: The Pfeiffer University Writing Center

Megan Keaton

Pfeiffer University is a small liberal arts institution with an undergraduate enrollment of 700-900. Prior to 2017, the Pfeiffer Writing Center—then called the Writing Lab—was part of the Learning Center. The Writing Lab was housed in a very small physical space, big enough for only one session at a time, and Writing Lab tutoring was not advertised to students. Therefore, few students even knew that the Writing Lab existed, much less what services the Writing Lab offered. Additionally, the Learning Center offered little to no training for tutors in responding to writing, meaning that faculty worried about the likelihood of plagiarism. This concern compounded the attendance issues as faculty were not encouraging their students to go to the Writing Lab. All in all, fewer than 100 students used the Writing Lab each academic year for several years.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the English Program made a case to move the Writing Lab under the purview of the Program, to utilize a larger space in a different building, and to hire a Director. The proposal was approved, and I was hired as Director beginning in Fall 2017. My goals coming in were threefold: (1) create a collaborative and welcoming culture in the Writing Center, (2) design a training and professional development program for the Consultants, and (3) make the center more visible across campus. I will focus on goals 2 and 3,

because these were the biggest problems we faced as we shifted from the Writing Lab to the Writing Center.

Designing a Training and Professional Development Program

To find consultants, I seek out recommendations from instructors and interview potential consultants; specifically, I look for writing and oral communication skills and the ability to work well with others. When I began as Director, Pfeiffer did not have a credit-bearing tutoring course. Therefore, I took the first two weeks of the Fall semester to train the consultants; in a six-hour training course—broken up across several days—consultants read about and discuss the foundations of tutoring. In this course, they learn about the following:

- understanding the purpose of a writing center, common misconceptions about writing centers, and the role of the consultant;
- setting the agenda for and concluding the session;
- using the rhetorical situation to help students write more effectively;
- working with a variety of learners;
- giving feedback on multimodal assignments and explaining basic design principles;
- discussing with students potential plagiarism, its consequences, and how to avoid it;
- and, now that we offer face-to-face and virtual sessions, conducting online sessions.

This course includes practical strategies, mock sessions, and talk-throughs of potential writing center session scenarios. In Spring 2020, I was able to design and begin teaching a credit-bearing Writing Pedagogy course, a third of which is dedicated to writing center tutoring; this course is now in the catalogue and offered every Spring. Students interested in becoming consultants are encouraged to take this course, though the course is not currently a requirement. Those who do not take the course are required to take the six-hour training course with me.

To continue their growth, consultants also engage in professional development meetings every other week to learn best practices and reflect on their tutoring experiences. For the first year, I led all of the meetings. Starting in Fall 2019, I became more intentional about consultants reading writing center studies scholarship throughout the semester and incorporating this scholarship into their tutoring practice. This reading results in consultants leading their own professional development meetings. At the beginning of the semester, each consultant chooses a topic about which they wanted to learn more, such as helping students with brainstorming, utilizing non-directive tutoring strategies, or adding humor into sessions.

The consultants are then required to read at least five articles or chapters from writing center studies publications about that topic. With feedback from me, each consultant plans a professional development session. This session needs to include one or two readings that the consultants read in preparation for the meeting and activities that push the consultants to discuss the readings and apply the concepts to their tutoring. Many consultants also create a handout with strategies they can use in future sessions. Because I give them the whole semester to work on their reading and planning, they lead their sessions the following semester. Consultants have been committed enough to this project that they have been willing to lead the meeting even if they are unable to work in the Writing Center during the semester they are set to lead.

Making the Center More Visible across Campus

At the beginning of each semester, I hold a meeting of all Writing Center staff to discuss ideas for promotion and outreach. We take the ideas from this meeting and work together to bring the ideas to fruition. These ideas range from targeted flyers for specific majors, to how-to videos, to events, to writing contests. The materials we choose to create are based on what the Writing Center staff feels needs the most attention and would be most effective.

One of the events we hold each Fall and Spring is a semester kick-off party. The kickoff is typically hosted in the Writing Center and we offer a variety of finger foods. This party gives students a chance to

learn where the Writing Center is located and to meet the consultants with whom they could work. We widely advertise these parties on our social media, through printed flyers, and through emails and encourage students, staff, faculty, and administration to attend. I take pictures and videos at these events and create a one-minute promo video that I circulate afterward.

I have also done some work to inform faculty, staff, and administrators about the Writing Center. The first way I have done this is through social media. For the most part, our students are more interested in Twitter and Instagram, while faculty, staff, and administrators are more involved on Facebook. Therefore, the students who work in the Writing Center control and post to our Twitter and Instagram accounts, and I post to our Writing Center Facebook page. The Facebook page has taught faculty, staff, and administrators about the Writing Center's services, events, and social media campaigns. I have also invited professors from different disciplines to come talk to the consultants about writing in those disciplines. Thus far, professors from the Natural Sciences, Business, and Communications as well as staff from Career Services and Disability Services have come to talk with the consultants.

At each meeting, I have seen that interactions with the consultants allow faculty to learn more about what we do in the Writing Center. Furthermore, I have made presentations at the institution's faculty professional development conferences. In these presentations, I have articulated the Writing Center's services and the ways in which the Writing Center can partner with instructors to help their students. Finally, the Writing Center emails instructors when their students attend a session. After each session, consultants fill out client report forms by detailing what assignment the student brought and the major concepts they worked on, such as brainstorming, thesis development, or MLA citation practices. I am careful to remind consultants that these summaries should not be evaluative in any form. This summary is then copied and pasted into the email to instructors along with the student's name and the date that they attended. This email (1) reminds instructors that the Writing Center is a resource available for their students and (2)

shows the variety of aspects with which the Writing Center can help (i.e., we do not only work on grammar).

Going Forward

In the future, I want to continue to find new ways of reaching out to faculty and students. For instance, we currently struggle with attendance from Juniors and Seniors; I want to do more work to encourage these older students to use our services. Also, though a few professors have invited us to their classrooms to talk to their students about the Writing Center, I would like to get into more classrooms and to present to every interested professor's classes every semester. In terms of professional development, I have started to encourage my Consultants to use the research they conduct each semester to write tutor columns for potential publication. So far, only a few Consultants have taken me up on this opportunity. I want to grow this number and develop a more formalized method of helping Consultants move from research to submission. I have also helped two Consultants embark on empirical, IRB-approved research projects; I would like to see more of my Consultants do this in the future.

Center Insight

- Writing Center staff: 1 Director, 7-8 undergraduate Consultants, 3-5 Administrative Assistants, and 4-5 English faculty who tutor in the Writing Center
- Hours open per week: 26-30
- Average number of appointments attended in the Fall (Fall 2017- Fall 2020): 337
- Average number of appointments attended in the Spring (Spring 2018- Spring 2021): 266

Old Writing Lab Space

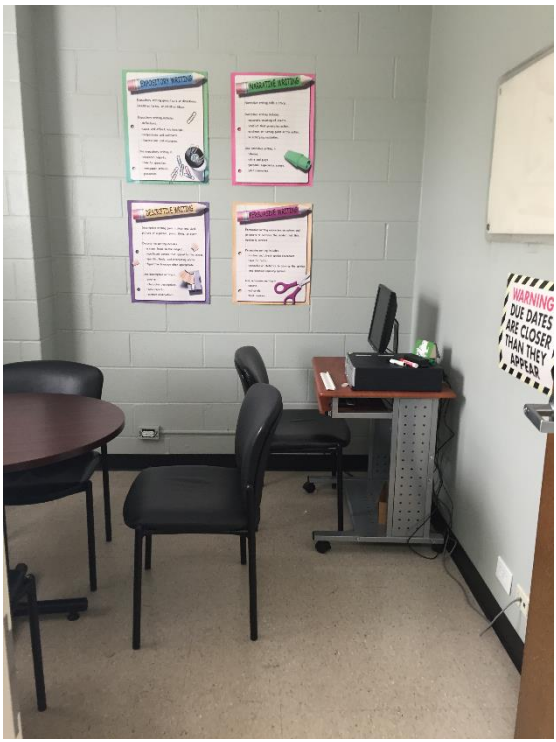

Fig. 1. Old Writing Lab (2017)

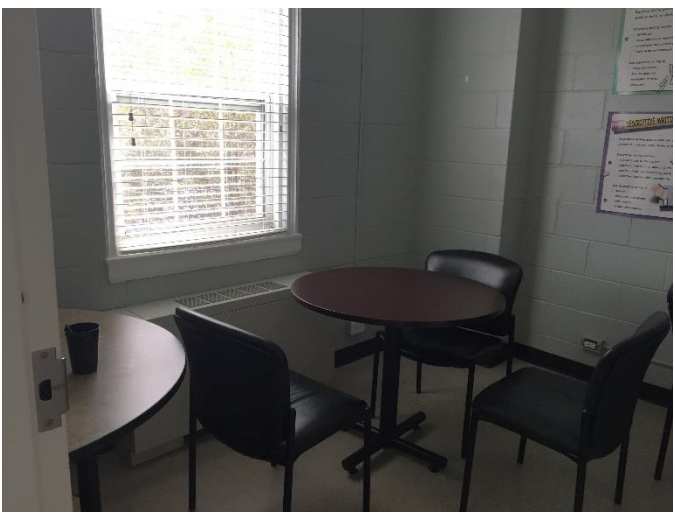

Fig. 2. Old Writing Lab (2017)

New Writing Center Space

Fig. 3. New Writing Center (2021)

Fig. 4. New Writing Center (2021)

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Call for Submissions

SDC Spring 2022

To encourage a wide variety of scholarly activity, the Spring 2022 issue will not have a specific thematic focus. Please consider submitting your work on the tutoring or teaching of academic writing, WC administration, WC assessment, tutor training, or any other topic related to the focus of the journal that you feel would be of interest to readers.

Deadline for submissions: 15 March 2022.

Articles can be theoretical or practical in focus (or a combination thereof) and should incorporate outside sources in MLA format according to the guidelines available on the *SDC* website at the link below:

https://southeasternwritingcenter.wildapricot.org/southerndiscourse#sdc_resources

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the editors at southerndiscoursejournal@gmail.com

SDC Fall 2022—SWCA Conference Retrospective

The Fall 2021 issue will feature articles that respond to the 2022 SWCA Conference theme, "Present Tense, Future Perfect: Shaping Purposeful Writing Center Practices." While anyone is welcome to submit, we strongly encourage submissions from those who attend or present at the 2022 SWCA Conference, which will be held online. In addition to transcripts of conference addresses, this issue will feature articles that grow from sessions at the conference. If you give a presentation or sit on a panel—or even if you are just inspired by a session you attended at the conference—you are strongly encouraged to "write up" your work and send it in for editorial and peer review.

Please note: The Fall 2022 will also include book reviews, a Back to the Center piece, and a Consultant Insight article. Submissions for these types of manuscripts do not have to be connected to the 2022 SWCA Conference theme.

Deadline for submissions: 15 September 2022.

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