



# WJL

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WATKINS, WHIDDON, AND CONYERS | RYAN  
CROSS AND CATCHINGS | SATURDAY

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## Editor's Note

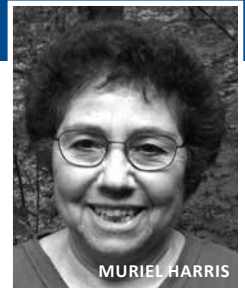
Muriel Harris

Some *WLN* issues focus on a specific subject, and we hope to offer more of these. But this regular issue addresses matters of perennial relevance: advisory boards, tutor talk, a study that measures student learning outcomes, and the influence tutoring can have on tutors.

Stacia Watkins, Scott Whiddon, and Rhyan Conyers report on their survey of the practices and infrastructure of writing center advisory boards and recommend such boards for the continuing development of a writing center. Next, Holly Ryan's article provides insights into how tutors at three institutions talk about themselves and to each other when communicating online. She explains her methodology and invites others to study tutor communication, noting that the results can guide how directors train and interact with their tutors.

Susan Cross and Libby Catchings analyze students' plans for revision after tutorials to categorize their learning outcomes. Cross and Catchings' coding of students' statements as expressing Higher Order Concerns (HOCs) or Lower (or Later) Order Concerns (LOCs) allows the authors to examine how their practices fulfill their writing center mission. Emma Saturday's Tutors' Column is an unusually heartening one as she narrates her story of how tutoring made a major impact on her life choices.

Congratulations to Michelle Miley for having her *WLN* article, "Feminist Mothering" (vol. 41, nos. 1-2), selected for inclusion in Parlor Press's *Best of Rhetoric and Composition Journals, 2018!* Finally, in the "coming soon" category: 1) watch for the announcement of the first open-access *WLN* Digital Edited Collection (DEC), edited by Karen Johnson and Ted Roggenbuck, entitled *How We Teach Writing Tutors* (developed from their *WLN* special issue on the subject). This DEC will soon be available on the *WLN* website; and 2) watch for our second webinar, on Oct. 26, for those interested in writing for publication in *WLN*, "WCA as Hero: A Scholar's Journey to Publication" (see webinar details on p. 30).





# A Collaborative Directorship: A Survey-Based Exploration of Writing Center Advisory Board Practices

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Writing center (WC) advisory boards—however they are named, staffed, and/or supported—can play a strong role in supporting directors, developing campus perceptions, and promoting value to stakeholders. However, such boards are rarely mentioned in writing center scholarship. Although advisory boards are often discussed in conference conversations (such as the 2014 Southeastern Writing Center Association-Kentucky Directors’ Day, where this project began), there has been no systematic investigation of board purposes, tasks, or implementation practices nor of such issues as structures in relation to institution type and size, concerns of authority and control, opportunities for creativity and community building, etc. In this article, we examine WC advisory board practices and infrastructures via the results of surveys distributed through major WC and related listservs in 2014 and 2017. We reflect on our findings with a focus on opportunity for development. As WCs are continually moving beyond their own spaces to support students, faculty, and even administrators, we hope our study promotes new ways of thinking about collaborative moves required for WC growth and systemic change.

## WHAT WE TALK ABOUT (OR, DON’T) WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ADVISORY BOARDS

Writing or learning center advisory boards exist in a variety of locations, from smaller schools to comprehensive universities in the United States and abroad, and are organized in different ways. Based on our work, we found that many involve faculty from across disciplines; others are formed, top-down, by administrators with strong roles. Some advisory boards, such as Harvard’s, are entirely student run. The diversity in arrangement speaks to the range in possibilities that exists in the field. However, when we

queried listservs and corresponded with colleagues at other institutions, many professionals noted that they knew of no field-specific studies that explained the processes of establishing and sustaining a productive advisory board. Terms such as “advisory board” or “steering committee” come up scant on CompPile-, MLA-, and WC-related databases.

Combing the *WLN* archives for the earliest mention of such a board led us to a 1996 list of promotional ideas, including “creat[ing] a center advisory committee with a representative from each academic division” (Bell 14). A 1998 book review of *The Writing Center Resource Manual* speaks to the need to educate a cross-campus advisory board of best assessment practices, given the differences in academic discourses (Vaught-Alexander 11). In a 2006 article detailing criteria that will help a rotating directorship function effectively for a WC, Ron Scheer also captures what an advisory board could offer any WC:

A group of tenured faculty members who value writing as a key component of student-centered learning can do much to provide credibility, leverage, and continuity. They can represent the interests of the writing center in faculty governance and cross-disciplinary committees. More important, they can speak for the writing center when the administration is making decisions affecting its resources. (8)

An active board can be integral during campus and curricular change. As Joe Essid noted about the board for the center he directs at the University of Richmond, working in collaboration with other campus members via an active and engaged board helps “maintain the Center’s reputation for quality” (4) by highlighting the required tutor pedagogy course for campus stakeholders outside those already involved. These efforts help Essid’s center play a role in larger campus discussions, “... to define a [tutor training] curriculum that is not external, but integrated with best practices and pedagogy” (5).

Much of the conversation that describes the practices of advisory boards could be defined as gray literature—produced internally and often hard to find or use despite its potential. As we searched various institutions for advisory board documentation, we stumbled upon a helpful guide to the ways to establish a vision for a board, clarify activities, and determine meeting agendas and membership, which Alan Craig developed at Georgia Perimeter College. As helpful as this and other similar documents were in our own initial discussions and respective initiatives of our board, we knew we wanted to cast a broad and systematic net to see

how such work is done and how such work yields rewards and challenges.

### **WHAT WE WANTED TO KNOW: OUR SURVEY**

Using a 34-question survey distributed in fall 2014 and again in spring 2017 via such academic listservs as *WCenter*, *WPA*, and the Small Liberal Arts College Writing Program Administrators listserv (*SLAC-WPA*), we examined how advisory board relationships—with colleagues, administrators, staff members, and/or students—can reflect a range of institutional values as well as sites for collaboration. In fall 2014, of our 98 respondents, 22 reported that they had advisory boards. In spring 2017, of our 142 responses, 22 again reported having advisory boards, indicating that the use of such boards is not a growing trend. Our entire survey is housed at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WritingCenterDirectors](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WritingCenterDirectors). Highlighting core threads of the survey seems best for this article. After asking participants to offer some background (school and center/staff size, title/rank, years of experience, access to course reduction for writing center administrators, student population, and WC usage), we inquired whether or not their WC had anything akin to an advisory board that linked work to other campus and/or community members. If so, for how long, and why was it formed? To learn as much as possible about localized practices, we offered distinct choices (“generate institutional interest, participation, or support” or “WAC intentionality,” for example) and open response opportunities. We also asked if this board was mandated by anyone outside the WC and how members are chosen and viewed as qualified. Specifically, we asked survey participants to define and holistically assess the tasks of their respective board (outreach, representation, etc.)—with an emphasis on training and buy-in. Finally, participants were asked to characterize what defines success in this collaborative enterprise.

### **WHAT WE’VE LEARNED SO FAR: FINDINGS**

The answers to ten of our survey questions presented significant findings and also areas yet to be explored about the development and maintenance of WC advisory boards. The discussion below focuses on our recent 2017 survey's 142 responses, although we also note comparisons to our 2014 results.

**Respondent Demographics:** *Are you faculty or staff? Tenure track? (Q3) Teaching load? (Q4)* Responses indicate a representation from different sectors of higher education—29% from research universities, 22% from regional universities, 39% from liberal arts colleges, and 9% from community colleges. Survey respondents

represented three employment categories: 46% are staff, 28% are tenured/tenure-track faculty, and 27% are non-tenure track faculty. Although many teach between two and four courses per year, some reported teaching as many as eight courses annually. Of faculty members who are serving in WCs, 85% receive course reductions in exchange for their work. A majority (68%) report having up to five full-time equivalent positions in their WCs. The range of these responses implies both means and challenges, depending on institutional context, of a WC director's ability to develop and sustain collaborations such as an advisory board.

**Longevity of writing center administrators:** *How long have you served as a WC administrator at your institution? (Q8)* Our respondents represented all categories of experience: less than three years (39%), between four and six years (29%), between seven and twelve years (15%), and more than twelve years (18%).

**Advisory board presence and longevity:** *Do you have an advisory board for your writing center? (Q10) How long has the advisory board existed (Q11)* Only 16% of respondents (22 total) indicated that they currently have a WC advisory board. Of those advisory boards, 35% are relatively new (three or fewer years old). In contrast, just over 25% of our respondents have had advisory boards for over 10 years.

**Campus conversations:** *Has anyone at the respondent's campus discussed forming an advisory board?(Q24)* Among the 120 respondents who do not currently have advisory boards, 24% stated that their institutions have explored forming one.

**Exigence:** *Who made the decision to have an advisory board (Q12) and who chose members? (Q14)* Although the number of respondents is small (n=18), the majority (88%) who responded to the question of "Who made the decision to have an advisory board" noted that either the current or former WC director had made this decision. Half of our 2014 survey respondents reported that deans or other administrators made this decision, so we are reluctant to draw conclusions from these data.

**Duties:** *What is the job of the advisory board? (Q17)* Of the respondents with an advisory board, 74% noted that its role was "to simply represent the rest of the university to the director/administrators." Between 30 and 40% of respondents noted the importance of the advisory board in other areas, such as approving major pedagogical directions of the WC or directing outreach opportunities.

**Preparation and Impact:** *To what extent has your advisory board helped establish interest, participation, or support with different groups? (Q18) Rank the advisory board's effectiveness in achieving its purpose. (Q20) How was your advisory board "trained" to understand WC work? (Q21)* Among respondents who have advisory boards, ratings of effectiveness are mixed. On a scale of one (not effective at all) to five (extremely effective), 25% responded with "not effective at all" or "slightly effective," 25% responded with "neither effective nor ineffective," and the remaining 50% responded with "somewhat effective" or "extremely effective." We also asked the extent to which the advisory board has helped establish interest in or participation with the WC among three groups: faculty, administrators, and students. On a scale of one (none) to five (a great deal), 47% responded "somewhat" or "a great deal" regarding faculty, compared to 37% for administrators and 11% for students. We also note that our colleagues who have advisory boards report low levels of training for board members, with 90% stating that their boards receive no training.

#### **WHAT WE NOW KNOW: OPEN RESPONSES AND RESEARCH FROM BEYOND OUR FIELD**

Although we learned much about the use of advisory boards through quantitative questions, open responses helped in terms of context and texture. Survey participants who offered open responses voiced ambitious yet clear definitions for board mission and success. For example, one 2017 survey respondent noted that a board exists "to support the Writing Program by providing counsel and feedback to the initiatives developed by the Program Director." Another characterized a successful board as "a group that contributes positively to the direction and operations of the center by providing sound advice and suggestions . . . regarding the wants and needs of the university." Such definitions assume common understandings of WC practices, which may require new member development to some degree. As indicated by our research responses, advisory boards could be responsible for many tasks within the WC. A board may be asked to direct the outreach opportunities, to approve major pedagogical direction (i.e., mission statement, student learning outcomes, etc.), to represent the university to the director/administrators, or to give the university a "voice" in how the WC functions. Of course, when a WC director with little background in the field is drafted or hired, which has been indicated in our survey as a less common practice, an advisory board of experienced writing professionals or administrators could serve in a support role.



Our research reflects a desire for training and faculty development as crucial for board success and long term buy-in. Respondents noted that professional development for those new to WC practices is valued but under-practiced, perhaps because of resource or time constraints. Although we cannot draw a straight line between degree-of-training and board success, this correlation seems intuitive. We believe that the intentional selection of members and participation of current WC administrative staffers might also be an integral component of a board's potential success. Writing center professionals know that such work as creating a charter, designing an assessment, and maintaining board members is easier said than done, and many of our initial conversations as we began thinking about this survey project reflected both frustration and critique. For example, some comments from our 2014 survey reflected how these boards are often placed in an institutional second-class status: ". . . any ad hoc committee I've ever tried to form that includes folks from the disciplines . . . hasn't lasted more than a semester or so, even though the Provost has 'invited' people to serve on it . . ." (anonymous). Others voiced concern about leadership on their own campuses from outside the writing studies world, how a program (in one particular case, a WAC-based board) is seen as "authentic only if it's run by someone who doesn't know anything about teaching writing" (anonymous).

Based on our study, we believe WC directors should embrace proven methods of systematic change as illustrated through interdisciplinary research. Advisory boards are common in the non-profit and business world. Businesses develop advisory boards for the same reasons as writing centers, such as promoting their agendas or informing stakeholders. In *Leading Change*, Harvard Business School Professor Emeritus John Kotter advocates for eight strategies for making institutional change. These steps begin with "establishing a sense of urgency," and "creating the guiding coalition" (37, 53). He argues, a strong leader must "find the right people," "create trust," and "develop a common goal" in order to be successful (68). For directors interested in developing advisory boards, support resources like Kotter's can provide reliable, proven advice in their creation, organization, and maintenance.

Resources from non-profit organizations can also be applicable to WCs seeking advisory board advice. For example, in the article "Finding the Right Board Members for your Nonprofit," readers are reminded that being a member of a board "requires continuous learning about those served and being an advocate for

the mission, making decisions that are in the best interest of the organization, ensuring prudent use of the nonprofit's assets, and looking ahead to help the nonprofit plan for the future" (National Council on Nonprofits). The article also includes links to helpful advice about choosing board members, writing an advisory board charter, self-assessing the effectiveness of the board, and approaching inactive board members. This advice reinforces the suggestion that the process of forming a WC advisory board may be challenging, but as Carol Rutz noted via email: "In my experience, having some faculty actively involved . . . has been nothing but helpful."

### **WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WCs MIGHT GO**

Small but powerful things are happening at Transylvania University and at Lipscomb University because of our increased focus on advisory projects. For several years at Transylvania, we've held a substantive faculty writing development workshop, bringing in scholars from across the United States. Although the cross-faculty group that works with the WC to plan these events (hosting 15-20 faculty members each time) is not a formal "advisory board," the collaborations between faculty and our WC have helped bring attention to writing initiatives. Faculty across divisions have also expressed increased interest in taking part in our recent course-embedded pilot programs. We look forward to exploring the formation of a possible advisory board, stemming from these successes.

At Lipscomb, the Advisory Board is comprised of representatives from six of ten colleges, a student non-staffer, a community member (local high school teacher), and the administrative staff of the Writing Studio (Director, Assistant Director, Student Administrator). The defining task for our board members is to serve as ambassadors for the Studio in the Lipscomb community. We are in the process of developing an online training module for our board members, and the charter we've written (based on advice from the National Council on Nonprofits) is guiding the decisions about what our members need to know to serve effectively in an ambassadorial function.

The design of WC advisory boards will most likely depend on the type of institution in which the board is created. This process could be incredibly different for a WC director at a college with a small number of faculty who mostly know each other and for those at large schools who can only know a handful of others from varying departments. However, such boards have the potential

for increasing the impact of both a director and a WC when it comes to a creating a more sustainable campus culture of writing.



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# A Multi-Institution Blog as a Site for Understanding Peer Tutor Discourse

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Writing center scholars have extensively examined discourses between tutors and writers (e.g., Mackiewicz and Thompson; Thompson; Harris). Scholarship about ways to talk and the values associated with those behaviors is codified in tutoring manuals such as Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli's *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* is Lauren Fitzgerald and Melissa Ianetta's *The Oxford Guide for*

*Writing Tutoring: Practice and Research*. Although scholars have examined tutor identity and development (e.g., Hughes et al.; Denny; Green), less explored are the ways tutors talk about themselves and among themselves. Additionally, little scholarship analyzes students' online discourses in that key developmental time when they are new tutors.

As a former tutor and now director, I use staff development in part to train tutors how to be literate in writing center Discourses. James Paul Gee describes Discourses<sup>1</sup> as "ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities including gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (6-7). In our training at Penn State University, Berks, I ask tutors to try on (and take on) the Discourses of the field both explicitly (i.e., suggesting where to sit during a session) and implicitly (i.e., encouraging my tutors to value collaboration). In this way, I attempt to enculturate tutors into what I think are the discipline's best practices. However, traditional undergraduate peer tutors have their own Discourses within which most writing center directors are not literate. Directors can, as Gee calls it, "mushfake" literacy (13), but most are not authentically part of the undergraduate tutor community and therefore not part of peer tutor Discourses. Understanding tutor Discourses may enable administrators to more effectively communicate with tutors. Two cohorts could be examined to understand tutor Discourses: 1) a local cohort such as tutors at a single writing center or institution or 2) a cohort that involves tutors from across mul-

multiple locales. Specifically, a multi-institution blog may be an ideal instrument for gathering data representing the range of ways peer tutors write about, act on, value, and believe tutor practices in different institutional, cultural, and social contexts. This article attempts to uncover possible characteristics of that Discourse as depicted in a multi-institution blog for staff education courses across three universities.

### **A MULTI-INSTITUTION BLOG: DESIGN AND LOGISTICS**

Blogs have been used in writing centers for some time, but this study attempts to expand how we discuss their design and use. In 2006, Melinda Baer shared how blogs were used in her writing center as a resources repository, an opportunity to include more technology, and a starting point for future staff conversations (2-3). In 2009, Jackie Grutsch McKinney offered more nuance to the topic of blogging by discussing writing style, integration of multimodal techniques, and public/private blogs (8-9). She suggested that in tutor training courses each tutor can write on a blog created by an instructor (8). In the assignment described in this article, I move beyond a single-campus classroom blog to a multi-institution blog across three campuses.

In the summer of 2011, I contacted two colleagues who taught tutors at two other institutions: Vicki Russel at Duke University and Eric Klinger at University of Colorado, Boulder. Both embraced the project. Our courses had slightly different purposes and practice training opportunities: Vicki's tutors were training to be writing fellows in first-year writing courses and did little-to-no tutoring during their course; Eric's tutors were training to be writing center tutors but did little-to-no tutoring during their course; and mine were training to be writing center tutors and were required to tutor two sessions per week (30 total sessions) during the course.

Vicki, Eric, and I collaboratively designed a series of prompts for the blog. We compared our syllabi and occasionally moved readings to new dates. Prompts were broad but still allowed students to draw on their readings. For example, one prompt read:

Imagine a scenario in which you work with a writer whose paper challenges one of your core beliefs. Describe the situation and discuss a strategy you might use to address the disconnect between your belief and that of the writer. What factors might go into your decision to challenge the writer's belief?

By understanding each other's objectives, we were able to design blog prompts we hoped would be appropriate for all tutors, even when they were not reading the same material.



Each week we posted a single prompt to our blog and then a subset of tutors at each school responded. Tutors were given the choice of using their real names or aliases; they were also reminded that tutoring sessions are confidential, so discussions of sessions needed to be anonymized. Tutors not creating posts that week posted comments.

### **PEER TUTOR DISCOURSE FEATURES**

As the semester continued, patterns emerged in tutors' posts. April Leuhmann and Liz Tinelli's work on teacher blogs offered a useful heuristic for coding features of emerging patterns. They analyzed blog posts and comments (326) and found that writings fell into three categories: Cognitive Work (wrestling, displaying competence, critiquing self, experimenting); Affective Work (showing emotions, advocating); and Social Work (encouraging, commiserating, mentoring, sharing resources, dialoguing, connecting). With IRB approval, I used Leuhmann and Tinelli's categories to code 143 tutor blog posts and 236 comments, adding two additional categories they did not account for (critiquing others and offering agreement) since those categories emerged from the analysis. As a single researcher, I read each post and comment multiple times and coded each twice a few months apart. If there was any discrepancy in my coding, I evaluated those individual cases. As I coded, I considered the blog and comments in relation to each other and the prompt. For example, if the blog post asked for feedback on an idea, then the comments were not coded as "critiquing" others since the critique was requested. Each post and comment could have been given multiple codes. My results showed that in the blog posts tutors-in-training were most likely to critique themselves (55% of posts) and share emotions by describing experiences or reactions to situations (34%). In comments to posts, tutors were most likely to encourage fellow tutors either explicitly or with language of agreement such as "I agree" or "Great point" (59%). Finally, new tutors were unlikely to critique one another's ideas or suggestions and often did not ask questions of other tutors. In fact, they only negatively critiqued another's ideas in five comments. In the following section, I provide examples and explore each of these findings.

#### **Critiquing Self**

Leuhmann and Tinelli's study defines self-critique as writing that identifies personal strengths and weaknesses (327). In my data set, tutors-in-training frequently self-critique.<sup>2</sup> In this representative example, a tutor posted the following:

For me, I've always been told I was a strong writer. I never really

agreed with that, but it's what I was told. In fact, for the most part, I don't particularly enjoy writing. I can never think of what to say, I second-guess myself constantly, and I never feel like my writing conveys what it is I'm trying to say very well.

In such admissions, tutors offer negative self-critiques (i.e., never agrees with a strong writer identity) about their own writing and abilities. Rarely did the original posters write self-congratulatory or wholly positive comments about themselves, although commenters were often quick to encourage writers. This tutor's image of herself suggests that literacy in tutor Discourses, at least as offered tutor-to-tutor, may involve denial of one's own ability. Such self-critique makes sense: when tutors work with writers, tutors do not want to seem superior. Perhaps tutors undercut their own ability so as to feel relatable to their peers, or perhaps they genuinely do not see themselves as strong writers at this early stage of tutor development.

Issues of authority are always at play in Discourses around tutoring, and posts like this one can reveal possible features of tutors' doing-valuing-believing combinations.

In other self-critique instances, posters reveal how they are shaped by external Discourses:

I have to confess...I'm a Type A. Completely and utterly. If I write anything, even if its [sic] a piece of [. . .] rhetorical crap, my mind is probably going to standby [sic] by it, cross its arms, and say "Yup, looks good to me." Years of the academic training to b.s. proficiently has conditioned it to be that way. [...] So you can imagine my surprise when control-happy me stepped into my first writing appointment a year ago [as a writer], completely ready to give over that control. I had no desire to be in control. I had been brought up thinking that the writing center was [a] fix-it, here's-your-polished-paper-now-leave [sic] place where struggling writers went. I was...was it possible[?]...being a TYPE B. Because of stigma. Tutors are going to have to fight Type As and Bs alike because of stereotypes and stigmas. They are going to have to shove the writing reins back into the hands of the tutoree [sic]. We have our work cut out for us, but reverse the stigma we shall!

In this example, the writer shares her realization that context might significantly influence her writerly identity. She starts by "confess[ing]" that as a Type A personality, she tends "to standby" her "crap" no matter what. However, once in a situation of being tutored, she says she "has no desire to be in control," making her think she might actually be a Type B personality. She seems to realize that the Discourses surrounding the writing center have shaped the way she believes she should behave in the center. She

suggests that her behavior in giving up control perpetuates a myth about writing center tutoring as tutor-controlled, as evidenced by her exclamatory ending that tutors will “reverse the stigma,” which seems to refer to the “fix-it” shop myth. In this example, the tutor laments authority issues that pepper our sessions (“[tutors] are going to have to shove the writing reigns back into the hands of the tutoree”), but does so in a positive way. Ending the post with “but reverse the stigma we shall,” this writer seems to echo the optimistic energy of many writing center professionals.

### **Sharing Emotions**

In Leuhmann and Tinelli’s study, sharing emotions is a significant part of teachers’ blog posts; that also holds true for the tutor blogs I examined. Most tutors shared personal stories. A recurring theme is represented in this excerpt:

I would write a paper and during the review, [my teacher] would demolish it. [...] I remember feeling sad, angry, and as though my opinion on my paper was not important. But it was those feelings that will make me a better tutor.

Many tutors wrote about when someone “demolished” a paper, and that such experiences fueled their desire to be a compassionate, empathetic tutor. Part of a tutor Discourse, then, seems to be that tutors can react emotionally to situations, but they need to reflect on that reaction and use it to make them better tutors.

### **Encouraging**

Another common aspect of tutor Discourses in my data set is encouragement. Leuhmann and Tinelli describe encouragement as it relates to “professional practices,” but I coded any moment that tutors-in-training offered positive support: “Great point” “I totally agree,” “I think that you brought up a very important point in your blog post,” and “I really liked the picture and the statement that we should not be scared to relearn things. [ . . . ]. Thanks for sharing this.” Tutors consistently encouraged one another in comments to blog posters.

Conversely, only five comments offered any criticism of posts, and one of them generated much in-class discussion. One critique occurred in response to a writer at another university who had not used their campus’s writing center: “You haven’t visited the writing center yet but you’re a tutor? I go to Penn State University so I guess I could be confused by Duke University’s policies. Do the tutors not tutor in the writing center?” One way to read this comment is that the original commenter is asking about the space and location of the writing center and wondering why the writer had

not visited the writing center space yet. However, this statement reads as a critique because the commenter is responding to a post that reveals the author had never been tutored. Tutors from two universities read the commenter's post as critical and judgmental because the comment suggested that the original poster did not have credibility because she had not herself experienced tutoring.

### **Lack of Questioning**

Finally, posters did not usually ask questions of their audience, nor did commenters frequently ask or respond to questions. As a writing center director, I spend much of my tutor-training time teaching tutors the value of asking questions during tutorials. However, in the blog forum, tutors rarely asked questions of one another, and, if they did, they rarely received a response. The comment section offered encouragement, commiseration, and sharing of additional perspectives or experiences, but few questions to original posters. Given how integral questions are to tutoring, I had hoped that the blog would also be a space where students asked questions of other writers. When I watch tutoring sessions in my center, my tutors-in-training do ask writers questions. Perhaps the prompt itself led to the discrepancy between the blog and tutorial questioning; it asked writers to "comment on" the posts. Other language such as "respond to" might have elicited another action, including questions. Additionally, a blog just may not be a place to engage in dialogue the way that we do in person, although Leuhmann and Tinelli's data set showed that teachers were quite likely to ask questions. Finally, another possibility is that tutors may not find value in asking questions—at least in that forum.

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

This analysis shows that tutors-in-training from the three campuses wrote in ways that are encouraging, self-reflective, and personal. The posts generally lacked questions, but these new tutors shared details of their pasts and a general positivity for their local and national colleagues. These elements seem to characterize some features of peer tutor Discourses. The analysis of these blog posts and comments is a starting point for understanding tutor Discourses because the posts begin to reveal saying-behaving-valuing literacy combinations—at least in this particular context. This study examined only three universities; other academic institutions may complicate this initial description of tutor Discourses. Limits to this analysis exist. First, requiring online blog posts written as part of a graded assignment to an audience of known and unknown peers obviously shapes what is and is not

expressed. Secondly, no tutors were interviewed as part of the study; posts and comments stood on their own. Therefore as someone who is not part of this Discourse community, my interpretation may be quite different from the original posters' intent. Yet, these posts can serve as one data point in a larger investigation into peer tutor Discourses. Finally, it is hard to determine if what students actually value is consistent with what they write. Perhaps future studies could use ethnographic methods that include undergraduate researchers to more effectively explore the relationship between the writing of tutors-in-training and their beliefs and values.

As an administrator and researcher, I find understanding peer tutor Discourses to be enormously helpful in four specific ways. First, identifying the ways tutors speak to one another can help me develop ongoing staff education opportunities. For example, I could imagine developing one workshop for handling conflict among peers or another for ways to give meaningful positive feedback. A second use for understanding peer tutor Discourse is that it helps me reflect on my own feedback practices with tutors and how my Discourse patterns intersect/converge/diverge with theirs. In addition, I may be able to help tutors who are struggling to fit into our community by possibly examining their interpersonal Discourse practices against those of the group. Finally, examining tutor Discourse opens lines of inquiry that I hope our community will take up, specifically to define the features of tutor Discourses and examine how literacy impacts group cohesion and development in a writing center community.

## NOTES

1. Gee makes a distinction between discourse (with a lowercase “d” and Discourse with a capital “D”). A capital letter “D” refers not just to syntax and grammar of language but also to values, beliefs, and behaviors that a person uses.

2. Please contact Holly Ryan (holly.ryan@psu.edu) for additional information about the coded data.



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# Consultation Length and Higher Order Concerns: A RAD Study<sup>1</sup>

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This study builds on long-standing discussions in writing center pedagogy about distinctions between higher- and lower-order concerns (HOCs and LOCs), which continue to be important for prioritizing issues students bring to writing sessions<sup>2</sup> and as a means of defending the integrity of writing center work. Ellen Schendel and William Macaulay note that outsiders assume that tutoring emphasizes lower-order concerns (47)—a misconception popular at least since 1984, when Stephen North observed writing centers dismissed as a kind of remedial "skills center" (22). In 2001 Donald McAndrew and Thomas Reigstad differentiated between the HOCs—rhetorical concerns not bound by rules—and LOCs—the more rules-based conceptions (42, 56). The HOC/LOC distinction retains the kind of taxonomic thinking about cognitive learning developed by Bloom in the 1950s and revised by Anderson

and Krathwohl. This framework places rote grammatical correctness knowledge on the opposite end of a process culminating in metacognitive activity (19-20).<sup>3</sup> Such metacognitive activity marks student movement from the performance of effective writing to the awareness of how and why that performance succeeds (Tingberg 75), thereby enhancing the likelihood that students transfer knowledge and skills beyond tutorial sessions and coursework. Here, the HOC/LOC distinctions made in writing center tutorials reflect the different kinds of learning that happen across students' educational experience, affirming the writing center's role as a conduit for transfer across the curriculum and across disciplines.

In 2000, Paula Gillespie and Neal Lerner redefined LOCs as "later-order concerns" to acknowledge the necessity of sentence-level proofreading, and the importance of addressing HOCs first (29). This revision illustrates an ongoing tension in writing center studies around the HOC/LOC divide; for example, Laurel Raymond and Zarah Quinn's study of mismatch and overlap between stu-

dent and tutor concerns demonstrates the extent to which the HOC/LOC distinction may be asserted in ways that overlook the legitimate needs of students themselves. A focus on content over grammar, for example, may "risk forcing writers to forfeit their authority over their own papers" (75-76), an observation reinforced by Cynthia Linville's discussion of conflicts between tutors' long-term and students' short-term goals (84), particularly for L2 learners whose goals have been shaped by professors' varying degrees of grammatical emphasis (Leki 9). Jessica Williams and Carol Severino, too, caution against focusing on HOCs for L2 learners, observing the different learning styles of international students (often sight-based learners) and Generation 1.5 students (often ear-based learners) (168).

As writing center scholars have refined these concepts and examined their implications in instruction, they struggled to move beyond anecdotal evidence, and a dichotomy arose between those who experienced "quantitative reluctance" and those who insisted on "more sophisticated methods of inquiry (formal, transferable)" (Schendel and Macauley 3). Embracing Cindy Johaneck's call for a contextualist research paradigm, we decided to engage in research that "exist[s] in the qualitative/quantitative dichotomy," recognizing that "narratives and numbers often coexist in some fashion in most research contexts" (114). We also wanted to narrow our project's focus so that we could maintain control, produce reliable and replicable data, and present findings in aggregated form toward future research projects. Our study design resembles a portion of one conducted at Grand Valley State University in which researchers examined students' plans for revision at the conclusion of a writing center session. They studied students' revision plans and compared students' expressions of global and/or local concerns, the definitions of which are virtually identical to ours of HOC and LOC (Schendel and Macauley 118-21). Results from Schendel's study revealed that students' revision plans were equally distributed between global and local concerns. We wondered what plans for revision our students were expressing. Because our mission is to promote critical thinking, we sought to determine whether our tutorials carried out that mission. To investigate this outcome, we analyzed students' revision plans that they wrote immediately after a writing center session, which we collected via electronic surveys. Revision plan comments, de-identified from individual students or sessions, provide evidence in aggregate about students' perceptions of their learning outcomes, which, in turn, provides a snapshot of the concerns addressed during a consultation. For example, while

one student might articulate a desire “to form a clearer direction before quoting and analyzing,” another might want to “correct my grammar errors” (study sample). To discover the types of learning represented in our tutorials, our research question asked: In revision plan comments written immediately after a consultation, what is the ratio of students’ expressions of desire to work on HOCs to their expressions of desire to work on LOCs?

## **METHOD**

To investigate this, we conducted an alpha test involving *in vivo* word coding<sup>4</sup> (Saldaña 46-48) from responses to the single question, “What do you plan to do next in developing or revising your writing project?” Words or phrases that suggested students focused on mechanics of grammar, punctuation, and spelling were coded as LOC. Examples include but are not limited to “proof-read,” “fix mistakes,” and “correct errors.” Wording that suggested students focused on larger issues was coded as HOC. Examples include but are not limited to “thesis,” “analysis,” and “rethink organization.” Some comments did not provide enough information to clearly indicate either category, such as “follow the writing specialist’s suggestions,” “revise paper,” and “edit essay,” in which case we categorized them as NEUTRAL. Comments indicating HOC and LOC, were categorized as BOTH. Throughout the alpha test process, we developed a set of definitions and examples for each category, a task that was sometimes simple due to obvious distinctions and sometimes quite complex, leading to nuanced debate. For example, “word choice” would clearly indicate LOC when a student used an obviously wrong word and did not catch the error. However, “word choice” would indicate HOC for an L2 Learner who —after using a translation device, thesaurus, and/or dictionary—needed to talk about differences among all connotations of a word. During our coding process, we resolved such issues by using contextual clues.<sup>5</sup>

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Data Selection and Coding Scheme**

To capture representative student data for the academic year, we analyzed three terms’ worth of student comments (n=657) from the pool of students who worked with writing specialists. A small convenience sample of comments (n=20) was taken from those 657 to test the inter-rater reliability (IRR) of the working definitions before calculating sums for the full data set. We tested IRR with three readers coding the sample in Excel. Adjacent to the comments, we created four columns for the four categories. Using our definitions and examples as guidelines, each reader

placed either a 1 or a 0 in each column, indicating either presence or absence of a concern. The columns were added, and the percentages for the three readers were averaged to determine IRR. Although the first pilot yielded a higher IRR than our predetermined minimum of 85%<sup>6</sup>, we refined our definitions, added more examples, and conducted a second round with new comments; this round of coding yielded an IRR of 91%, well above the threshold for the degree of agreement needed to confirm the stability of our definitions. Table 1 below shows the coding dimensions that provided the parameters for our choices.

**TABLE 1: HOC-LOC CODING DIMENSIONS**

<b>Dimension HOCs</b>	<b>Definition:</b> Word, phrase, or clause indicating writers think of their project beyond sentence-level mechanics.	<b>Potential Positives: <i>Nouns</i></b> such as “thesis,” “analysis,” “organization,” “development.” <b><i>Verbals</i></b> such as “plan on developing,” “will rethink,” “strengthen,” “better integrate”
<b>Dimension LOCs</b>	<b>Definition:</b> Word, phrase, or clause indicating writers think of their project in terms of sentence-level mechanics.	<b>Potential Positives: <i>Nouns</i></b> such as “grammar,” “punctuation,” “spelling,” “mistakes.” <b><i>Verbals</i></b> such as “cleaning up grammar,” “fixing errors,” “correcting,” “punctuating.”
<b>Dimension NEUTRAL</b>	<b>Definition:</b> Word, phrase, or clause not able to be definitively placed in HOC or LOC category.	<b>Potential Positives: <i>Nouns</i></b> such as “revision,” “another draft,” “second edit.” <b><i>Verbals</i></b> such as “following tutor’s advice,” “working more on my paper.”

After establishing IRR, we coded our full sample of 657 comments. To calculate percentages for each dimension, we divided the total number in each column (coding dimension) by the total number of comments for all three terms (see Table 2). An independent reader confirmed the calculations.

**FINDINGS**

The results clearly indicated that student comments reflected HOCs more often than LOCs.

HOC comments represented 60.7% and LOCs represented 29.7% of the total number of comments (657). These results indicated a ratio of approximately 2 to 1. Because the BOTH category does not contain information about how much time was spent on each type of concern, we further analyzed the data to scrutinize comments that identified only as HOC or LOC. (For example, in Fall 2014, 119 - 34 = 85 unique HOC coded responses). In this subset of data, HOCs represented 45% and LOCs 14%, of the total number of comments (657), an approximate ratio of 3 to 1.



**TABLE 2: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF HOCs AND LOCs**

Term	HOC	NEUTRAL	LOC	BOTH
Fall 2014	119	57	72	34
Winter 2015	155	66	68	39
Spring 2015	125	43	55	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>399 (60.7%)</b>	<b>166 (25.2%)</b>	<b>195 (29.7%)</b>	<b>103 (15.7%)</b>

Note: Reviewers could code comments in more than one category. If a comment contained a HOC and LOC, a single comment would receive 3 codes (HOC, LOC, and BOTH). Percentages are calculated on the total number of coded comments for all three terms (657).

These results posed a follow-up question: *Were consultants sub-consciously driving results by focusing on our mission to promote critical thinking?* To discover this answer, we reviewed students' pre-consultation intake forms during the 2014-2015 academic year. From a drop-down menu, students chose "grammar" more often than any other single issue (n=1,401), but the second and third most frequent choices, "organizing ideas" and "developing ideas" (n=2,023), exceeds the focus on grammar. Furthermore, aggregate results reveal students' emphasis on HOC choices on the intake form appear to align with their continued desire for HOC revision, as expressed in the end-of-session evaluation. Thus, we appear to be fulfilling our mission as students are seeking HOC development and consultants are employing HOC strategies during sessions. Nevertheless, because our data is disassociated from individual responses, we cannot know whether or how individual student focus changed; future studies might devise ways to more accurately track student responses from intake to post-session evaluation and determine causality.

## DISCUSSION

Our project's results differ from those of Schendel, who found students in her study at Grand Valley State "were focused on local concerns (grammar/mechanics/tweaking documentation) about half of the time; the other half of the time, students said they intended to focus on higher-order concerns such as developing content . . . or reorganizing the writing . . ." (92-93). A multitude of reasons might explain this difference, but two emerge as strong candidates. First, while we have a robust peer tutoring program, this study focused only on comments written after a consultation with a professional writing specialist, whereas Schendel's study involved mostly peer consultants. Second, our writing specialist consultations lasted as long as an hour; Grand Valley State ses-

sions lasted 30 minutes. At Irvine, we try to teach peer tutors the same values and practices that we professional writing specialists live by, and peer tutors are well aware of HOC/LOC issues. We would be surprised to find a tutor trainer in another writing center who does not take the same approach. Therefore, while the peer/professional difference could be a strong contributing factor, it is probably not the primary cause. We believe the most influential factor is the extra time afforded in the longer consultations, which could allow students to absorb the issues discussed more thoroughly, which may bring HOCs to the forefront of their thoughts as a session draws to a close. If this analysis is correct, it suggests an argument for longer tutorials, which means more time spent testing and establishing the parameters of knowledge as a shared social artifact—what Kenneth Bruffee understands as the foundation of the tutoring experience (331-32). Longer consultations may also provide space to connect a writer's intrinsic and extrinsic motivations toward deeper engagement with a given project (DeCheck 34-35), and the "motivational scaffolding" that Mackiewicz and Thompson see as critical to enhancing student comfort (45-47). In other words, the longer consultation could provide the type of environment Andrea Lunsford describes as a "Burkean Parlor" (8), in which student and consultant can engage in deep conversation, thereby producing socially constructed knowledge that students can both articulate and retain because they participated in its construction.

Such a conclusion cannot be validated from our limited study alone. Future studies comparing consultations of different lengths by both professional writing specialists and peer tutors across institutions could build a body of knowledge sufficient to warrant informed decisions about ideal consultation lengths. Future studies could also refine or even redefine the HOC/LOC divide contextualized within the ELL population, focusing more acutely on issues such as "word choice" coding decisions mentioned above. However, for now, our study indicates that our center's work with students addresses both HOC and LOC concerns, with HOCs predominating what students want and what students get. It further indicates we are fulfilling our mission, as we believe that the students' focus on higher order concerns, while also being mindful of later order concerns, helps them develop flexible strategies for writing and revision.

## NOTES

1. The authors thank Jonathan Alexander, Daniel Gross, Percival Guevarra, and David Lacy for their assistance with this article.

2. Other writing center-oriented case studies use the HOC/LOC framework; see Geiger, et al.; Bruce and Rafoth's work with ESL writers; and Murphy and Sherwood's anthology.

3. Patrick Sullivan uses Anderson and Krathwohl's revised taxonomy to promote creativity alongside other literacy practices in composition classrooms; he notes similarities between Anderson and Krathwohl's framing of metacognitive learning and key learning outcomes in statements by NCTE, NWP, and the CWPA (Sullivan 19-20).

4. Developed by ethnographers to register definitions communities create for themselves.

5. Our IRB consent mandated that we view student comments in aggregate form with no identifying information, so we could not separate L1 and L2 responses.

6. We based our minimum agreement standard on Cheryl Geisler's simple agreement standard of 85% or better (90-91); we did not account for chance agreement using Cohen's Kappa.



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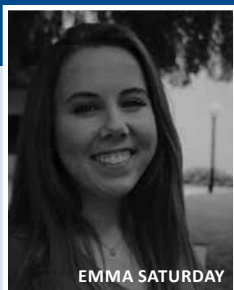
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## Tutors' Column: "Reflecting (on) the Research: Personal Lessons from the IWCA Collaborative"

Emma Saturday  
University of La Verne



EMMA SATURDAY

At the age of 17, I had my entire future mapped out: attend a small liberal arts college, major in English, earn a single subject teaching credential, and become a high school English teacher. I had assumed that everyone was as sure of their future as I was. So, I was shocked when I began my freshman year at the University La Verne, a private liberal arts university in Southern California, and met countless students who had no answer to the Big Question, “What do you want to do with your life?” I was positive about my career choice because in my eyes, there were no other real choices. I had hopes of inspiring generations of high school students through literary study because it had been very important to me, but, like many other English majors, I also naively assumed that teaching was the only career available to me. However, working as a writing tutor in my university’s multidisciplinary tutoring center, the Academic Success Center (ASC), opened opportunities for me that changed how I viewed my future. Right from my first semester, I found that I loved my work in the ASC—loved helping other students with their writing and loved learning more about writing myself. I began to study the theory surrounding writing tutoring and the fields connected to it (rhetoric and composition, linguistics, etc.). Soon, this work had me developing ASC-centered research projects and participating in academic conferences, and the fixed shape of my future became itself something to question, rather than the answer it had always been.

As a student, I have always been intrinsically motivated, driven to succeed and achieve. However, I had scarcely considered graduate school. All my life, I have found myself following a superstar older sister, one who had always been on the path to a PhD program. I saw graduate school as out of my reach, but also unnecessary—to be a secondary school teacher did not require anything more than a bachelor’s degree and a teaching credential (or so I thought). When I started conducting research in the ASC and un-

derstanding the implications of this opportunity, my views on my future began to change.

In January, I began working on two research projects with the ASC's director: one aimed at coding and analyzing transcripts of tutoring sessions using a recent empirical writing center study, Jo Mackiewicz and Isabelle Thompson's (2014) *Talk About Writing*, as its basis, and another studying ASC users' linguistic and educational identities. The projects were the basis for presentations I would be helping to deliver at the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) conference in Tampa, Florida.

The research had a pronounced effect on both my academic and professional identities. As an English major, I was unfamiliar with how to conduct empirical research—I knew how to write a literary analysis; I did not know how to read and summarize a body of studies on a topic, nor how to gather and analyze data. To say that I was overwhelmed and intimidated would be an understatement. I spent hours working my way through databases, journals, and articles, culling and synthesizing information in order to relay it to my director. More than just seeing the ASC as a place where I worked solely as a tutor, I now recognized it as a place for interdisciplinary scholarship. I was employing the critical thinking and writing skills I had learned as an English major but in service to modes of thinking and information drawn from sociology, linguistics, rhetoric, and other fields.

As I devoted much of my spring semester to furthering this research, I found that I enjoyed expanding my role in the ASC to something beyond a tutor. I appreciated the new connectivity I had with students through my research: I was not only helping them grow as writers but pushing them to think in new directions about their identities as students, just as I had been. I felt that this research was a new form of “teaching” that I had not previously considered. The conversations that arose throughout my research helped deepen the significance of my project as students asked themselves new questions. While I had worried that the daunting and scientific term “research” would separate me from my role as a tutor, I sensed that my projects were contributing greatly to my connections with students.

Many recent studies note the wide range of effects undergraduate research has on students, their academic motivation and goals, their engagement within disciplines, and their career paths (Willis et al.). My experience supports these findings. What they fail to capture, though, is how those changes feel. While I could

sense my growth as a student, I did not comprehend how my personal identity was changing until I reached the International Writing Centers Association conference, “The Collaborative,” in Tampa, Florida. Along with the new experiences of flying across the country alone, checking into a hotel by myself, and exploring a city I had never seen before, I matured, I learned, and I grew up. The experience of presenting research alongside my director to a room full of highly educated scholars was both nerve-wracking and thrilling. While attending other conference sessions, I was continually surprised at not only the variety of research being conducted, but also the passion these scholars possessed for the field of writing center research.

As one of the few undergraduates in attendance, I found my insights welcome and unique in many of the discussions I participated in. One presentation in particular, on empirical research involving undergraduate tutors in writing centers, helped me grasp the fuller implications of my own involvement in ASC research projects. Despite the widespread understanding of the value of undergraduate research, most students in writing-related fields do not have the opportunity to pursue real empirical research as undergraduates. A survey conducted at the University of Arizona notes how undergraduate research helps students recognize their career goals: “over 80% [of participants] believed that their undergraduate research experience had a substantial effect, including 46% who felt that it was critical in their career choice” (Yaffe et al. 29).

Perhaps the most salient outcome of my participation in the conference was that I saw firsthand the range of jobs available to me in the field through the people I met: writing center directors and assistant directors, coordinators, professors, lecturers, administrators, and more. While at the conference, I became aware that not only was graduate school entirely within my reach, but it could propel me into countless careers that I had never known about. Now, the professional and academic opportunities open to me through my writing center work seem endless. Reflecting on the IWCA conference, I recall one particular interaction in which Roberta Kjesrud, former IWCA president and a well-respected researcher in the field of writing center studies, reacted with shock when she heard that I had come to the conference as the only tutor from our center. She and I discussed my research and the conference presentations I had helped run, and she surprised me at the end of our talk when she expressed the potential she saw in me to become a PhD candidate in a writing center-related field.

Her comments were not only inspiring but also encouraged me to understand that I could have a place in this field as a professional, if I choose to pursue it.

I can see now that my high school choice to become a secondary school teacher had been the result of the unexamined belief that I had no other choices that would connect my love of literature and writing to a chosen profession. Now, although I have not decided which path my future career will follow, I recognize that my field of study will not limit my direction in life. As the result of my research and professional development in writing center studies, my problem now is the opposite: confronted with choices, I am going to face difficult decisions about my future—an outcome I never expected.



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## Announcements

### **NORTHEAST WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION**

**March 30-31, 2019**

Western Connecticut State University  
Danbury, CT

*“Voices of Engagement: The Roles Writing Centers Play in Making Writing Meaningful”*

Keynote speakers: Anne Ellen Geller and Neal Lerner

For questions about submitting proposals, contact Susan De Rosa (derosas@easternct.edu) or Stefan Spezio (sspezio@qcc.cuny.edu). For information about the conference, registration, and scholarships, see the NEWCA conference website: [newcaconference.org/](http://newcaconference.org/). For other questions related to the conference, contact the conference chair, Michael Turner: [newcaconference@gmail.com](mailto:newcaconference@gmail.com). Proposal deadline: December 1, 2018.

### **NEW WLN WEBINAR: “WCA AS HERO”**

*WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship* is proud to announce our second webinar: “WCA as Hero: A Scholar’s Journey to Publication.” This online event, covering strategies for drafting an article for *WLN*, including how to find time to write, how to understand the lit review process, and how to find or start a writing group, will be held on Friday, October 26, 2018, 3:00pm to 4:00pm E.S.T. and is hosted by *WLN* Associate Editors Elizabeth Kleinfeld, Sohui Lee, and Julie Prebel. There will be opportunities for Q & A.

The webinar is FREE but please R.S.V.P. at: [csuci.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_n1vum5cSTgibyetzc6\\_79A](https://csuci.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_n1vum5cSTgibyetzc6_79A). Their previous webinar, “Introduction to Publishing in *WLN*,” is available on the *WLN* website: [wlnjournal.org/wln.php](http://wlnjournal.org/wln.php).

## MILEY'S ARTICLE SELECTED FOR PARLOR PRESS BOOK

The editors of Parlor Press's *Best of Rhetoric and Composition 2018* have selected Michelle Miley's "Feminist Mothering: A Theory/Practice for Writing Center Administration" as an entry in this year's book. Her essay appeared in *WLN*'s volume 41, numbers 1-2. Congratulations, Michelle Miley!

### SEEKING MORE WLN MENTORS

The *WLN* mentor match program seeks more mentors experienced in writing center work and scholarship to assist writers developing articles for *WLN*. Mentors give feedback to writers submitting to *WLN* so that they may develop more fully formed articles for publication. Mentors actively engage in goal-setting with mentees. Mentors also work with writers who may be interested in writing, but aren't sure what to write about or where to begin. In other words, a *WLN* mentor does much the same work as tutors in a writing center. If you would like to serve as a mentor, please contact Chris LeCluyse (clecluyse@westminstercollege.edu) or Karen Keaton Jackson (kkjackson@nccu.edu).

### GET INVOLVED WITH WLN

**Interested in serving as a reviewer?** Contact Karen Gabrielle Johnson (KGJohnson@ship.edu), Ted Roggenbuck (troggenb@bloomu.edu), and Lee Ann Glowzenski (laglowzenski@gmail.com).

**Interested in contributing news, announcements, or accounts of work in your writing center to the Blog (photos welcomed)?** Contact Brian Hotson (brian.hotson@smu.ca).

**Interested in guest editing a special issue on a topic of your choice?** Contact Muriel Harris (harrism@purdue.edu).

**Interested in writing an article or Tutors' Column to submit to *WLN*?** Check the guidelines on the website: ([wlnjournal.org/submit.php](http://wlnjournal.org/submit.php)).

## Conference Calendar

**November 1-4, 2018:** NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PEER TUTORING IN WRITING

South Padre Island, TX

**Contact:** Randall Monty: [randall.monty@utrgv.edu](mailto:randall.monty@utrgv.edu) / [rgvwc17@gmail.com](mailto:rgvwc17@gmail.com); **conference website:** [www.ncptw.info/index.php?msg=2](http://www.ncptw.info/index.php?msg=2).

**November 8-9, 2018:** MIDDLE EAST-NORTH AFRICA WRITING CENTER ALLIANCE

Al Ain, UAE

**Contact:** Elizabeth Whitehouse: [Ewhitehouse@uaeu.ac.ae](mailto:Ewhitehouse@uaeu.ac.ae); **conference website:** [bit.ly/menawca2018](https://bit.ly/menawca2018)

**November 9-10, 2018:** SECONDARY SCHOOL WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION

Arlington, VA

**Contact:** [sswca.board@gmail.com](mailto:sswca.board@gmail.com); **conference website:** [sswca.org](http://sswca.org).

**February 23, 2019:** NORTHEAST OHIO WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION

Ravenna, OH

**Contact:** For proposals, Leah Schell-Barber: [LSchell@starkstate.edu](mailto:LSchell@starkstate.edu); for registration, Angela Messenger: [aibarwick@ysu.edu](mailto:aibarwick@ysu.edu); **conference website:** [neowca.wordpress.com](http://neowca.wordpress.com).

**March 30-31, 2019:** NORTHEAST WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION

Danbury, CT

**Contact:** 2019 NEWCA Committee and Michael Turner: [newcaconference.org](http://newcaconference.org)

**October 23-25, 2019:** LATIN AMERICAN NETWORK OF WRITING CENTERS

Guadalajara, Mexico

**Contact:** Minerva Ochoa: [euridice@iteso.mx](mailto:euridice@iteso.mx); **conference website:** [sites.google.com/site/redlacpe/home](https://sites.google.com/site/redlacpe/home).



## ***WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship***

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