
NORTH TEXAS WRITING CENTER ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

APRIL TRAFTON

Change in writing center work is perpetual; it always has been. As the demands of the courses we support change to reflect the new and different forms of writing in the real world, we, as writing center people, bend and shift. We adapt to the changing times, sometimes with grace, but always with the same goal in mind: to focus on students and meet them where they are.

I recently transitioned from tutoring full time into a Learning Lab Manager position, and even in my short time in this new position, the processes and staff in our center have changed. We've launched new programs and reconsidered old ones. My day-to-day is unpredictable and sometimes chaotic, as I'm sure those in positions like mine know. Even as a tutor, I struggled to find balance between meeting the demands of students, staying current on writing center issues, and nurturing the passion that I have for this work. Our days can be rough and thankless, but they can also be heartwarming and fulfilling. We can be confident in our abilities and also unsure of how to help. It is out of this limbo that the theme of this conference, "Embrace the Beta: How to Navigate Liminal Space in the Writing Process," was born.

Intentionally examining challenges that stem from this uncertainty allows us to maneuver strategically through the state of unknowing. We are able to realize the weight of liminality and to appreciate more fully the position that students are in as they face tasks that are often quite foreign to them. They steadily encounter change just as we do, and in our shared space of flux, we can support our students, and we can support each other by recognizing the commonality of our situations.

In coping with liminality, a tribe of like-minded individuals is invaluable. The North Texas Writing Center Association has been a mainstay and an anchor in my professional life, and during my time as a member of this organization, I have seen it morph and grow into a solid support network. I am refreshed to see new faces at each conference and comforted by those who have been with the organization and participated in events semester in and semester out. The collaboration within the group fortifies us and elevates our work with our students; it's the people that make membership in NTWCA worthwhile.

I hope that the events throughout the day and your participation in the NTWCA will help to ground you in your work and provide channels for meaningful discussion on finding our grooves. I encourage you to knit yourself into this group, get involved, talk to people you don't know, ask that question in the back of your mind, solicit advice, and share your perspective. All of us are richer for knowing and learning from each other while operating within the writing center space. Let's discover together and support each other along the way.

Welcome to the North Texas Writing Centers Association Fall Conference. I'm so glad you're here!

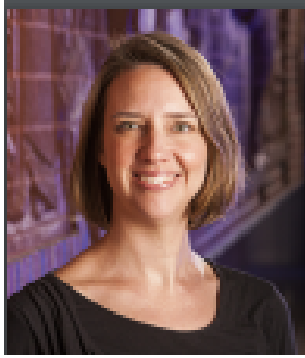
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NTWCA Fall Conference
hosted by

TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY





The Struggle is Real(ly) Good
for You:

CHALLENGING FIXED MINDSETS IN WRITERS

DR. STEPHANIE ROBERTSON

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Stephanie Robertson is a licensed psychologist and a licensed specialist in school psychology. She is the former director of student counseling services at Tarleton State University. She transitioned into a faculty role in the department of psychological sciences two years ago in order to pursue research and clinical practice with children. She has worked in the public schools, non-profit, and higher education for over fifteen years. Her primary area of research is in the field of invisible disabilities (attention-deficit/hyper activity disorder, anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and autism spectrum disorders) and their impact on student performance.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

10:30	Check in
11:00	Welcome
11:15	Keynote
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Writing Center Tour
1:30	Breakout 1
2:15	Breakout 2
3:00	Closing/Business meeting (all are encouraged to stay)

This presentation will provide an overview of Mindset Theory and its impact on student success, student effort, and perceptions of failure. We will discuss practical strategies for assessing types of mindsets and basic strategies for reframing student failure.

THE ENCOURAGING PUSH

JIMMY PEEBLES - TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE
TRINITY RIVER (PROFESSIONAL STAFF)

Many students feel uncomfortable when seeking writing help. Aside from confusing prompts, students doubt their abilities to communicate through the written word. By putting my colleagues in students' shoes, I hope to show them how difficult it can be to express oneself, but also offer concrete skills on helping students through the litmus and into confident expression.

LIMINAL SPACES, LIMINAL FACES

SARAH SCHRANTZ - TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE
NORTHWEST (PROFESSIONAL STAFF)

This round-table discussion is all about the liminality of the tutors, the students, and the space itself. The writing process itself is liminal, but it cannot be separated from the people involved, nor can the environment be excluded since the spaces students learn and write in can shape their learning experiences. Writing centers especially are important spaces to consider in the writing process since they are more liminal spaces than most on campuses due to their flexible nature. This discussion is a chance for writing tutors to discuss how they see liminality in action in these areas, how to use our perpetual liminal statuses as tutors and as a center to get students out, and how to define our function and ourselves while staying in an undefinable zone of liminality.

COME TO THIS
PRESENTATION to learn
how writing students feel
and how you reach them.
<SESSION 1>

COME TO THIS
ROUNDTABLE to learn
how liminality is present in
our spaces, our students, and
our tutors, not just in
writing.
<SESSION 1>

WRITING DURING THE INBETWEEN

DR. JENNIFER PHILLIPS-DENNY (WC MANAGER)
& JACLYN KILMAN (PROFESSIONAL STAFF) -
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

Repeat clients are in a liminal space between writing center appointments. How can we help them process what was, and how can we help prepare them for what is to come? At Texas Woman's University, more than 2/3 of our appointments are with repeat clients. Individual writing consultants who have built relationships with their repeat clients have personal ways of fostering client writing growth during these times of in-betweenness. They give these clients "assignments" to complete before the next appointment, help them set goals for the next appointment, provide them with handouts to read before the next appointment, and, simply by thinking about writing assignments, continue an internal dialogue about writing in the liminal space. But might we consider a more prescribed strategy for repeat clients in the liminal space between appointments? How might that strategy be grounded in writing center theory and best practices, and how might we assess how we are serving students during these transformative periods?

COME TO THIS
ROUNDTABLE to learn
ideas and strategies for
serving repeat clients
between appointments.
<SESSION 1>

TUTORING DEAF STUDENTS IN THE WRITING CENTER

CARLY RASTANDEH - TARRANT COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE NORTHWEST
(PROFESSIONAL STAFF)

COME TO THIS
ROUNDTABLE to discuss
best practices when working
with deaf students in the
Writing Center.
<SESSION 2>

The Academic Learning Center at TCC's Northwest campus is seeing more and more deaf students within the writing center. We are trying to respond to this change by educating ourselves, so we can provide our students with the best services. The purpose of the round table would open up a discourse about how other writing centers respond to the needs of their deaf students. The discussion would include information such as Deaf culture, ASL's grammar structure, communicating with a student and translator, etc. Therefore, it would also be beneficial for writing centers who have not addressed these needs as it can help them create programs, or at the least bring tutors' attention to these students.

EMBRACING LIMINAL SPACE AS THE WRITING CENTER FINDS ITS PLACE

JENNIFER RUSSUM - VANGUARD UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (WC DIRECTOR)

COME TO THIS
PRESENTATION to learn
how you can collaborate in
cross-regional research
regarding the institutional
challenges writing center
directors face.
<SESSION 2>

There is almost no research regarding the administrative issues that take up a significant portion of a writing center directors' time and attention. These issues are often related to space, place, and purpose of a writing center within a university's institutional structure. Directors are always facing shifts – in physical location on campus, in oversight and supervision, in changing (shrinking) budgets, or even in broader policies or laws that impact the classes or students the writing center typically serves. These constant changes tend to feel isolating and negative. In this presentation, I will categorize some shifts writing center directors often face to offer a sense of order and solidarity grounded in data. Then I will suggest ways these liminal spaces, though seemingly chaotic or punitive, can be used to better serve students, train stronger consultants, and advance the field of writing center service and research. In the latter part of my presentation, I will ask audience members to share positive outcomes they were able to find or create in the liminal spaces they have faced as writing center directors and staff members.

NAVIGATING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

ASHLEY OLLIFF (GRAD STUDENT), JESSICA
VAUGHN (UNDERGRAD), & LAURA BURKHART
(UNDERGRAD) - TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

One misconception students may have upon entering college is that writing will only be relegated to their English classes. This may have been the case at one point, but employers want employees who are able to write effectively. To fill this need, schools began to act. As Paul Anderson et al. have stated, more universities have been working to improve the writing of their students by undertaking writing-intensive programs such as writing across curriculum (WAC) or writing-in-the-disciplines (WID) (4). In turn, writing centers are now being used by students who need help bridging the gap between their normal course work and the writing portion. The topic of this proposed round-table discussion would be to explore the ways that writing centers navigate the liminal space that comes with WAC by employing tutors who are of different majors to better anticipate the needs of our students. Furthermore, we will discuss if there is anything else that can be done to aid the WAC initiatives on our own campuses.

COME TO THIS
ROUNDTABLE to learn
ways in which writing
centers can better aid in
WAC initiatives on their
campuses.
<SESSION 2>

NEWS FROM Ntwca MEMBERS

HIRING UPDATES FROM TCC NORTHWEST

Zahmar Rounds holds a BS in Psychology from UH. His academic interests include education and the psychology of education. His post-grad plans would have him teaching at the professorial level. He has been a tutor for about four years, and has tutored at University of Houston Downtown and College of the Mainland. These two colleges plus the experience gained from various writing conferences fuel his desire to continue to be an effective tutor. He is a fan of cats, and some of his hobbies include: table-top RPGs, TCGs, and the occasional game of basketball.

Mia Gonzalez graduated from Texas Tech University with her B.A. in English and a minor in History. Before coming to Tarrant County College, Mia worked as a tutor for the TECHniques Center at Texas Tech where she assisted university students with learning differences and disabilities in managing their course work and finding individualized study strategies. While at Texas Tech, she also tutored student athletes, helping to ease their transition into a four year university and provide content clarification. As a former student of Tarrant County College, Mia is passionate about making education accessible and individualized so that students with diverse academic backgrounds may find and maintain success in their studies. In her free time, Mia loves spending time with her family, enjoying the outdoors, catching up on favorite television shows, reading a new book, and writing in cozy coffee shops.

Carly Rastandeh is a full-time Instructional Associate at the NW Academic Learning Center. Before becoming a full-time Instructional Associate, she supported students in an on-call capacity. She is passionate about literature and making education accessible to every student. Carly is also eager to support faculty as a part of the Tutors in Classes program at the ALC. She holds a B.A. in English from Texas Woman's University in Denton and plans on acquiring a Master's in Linguistics from University of North Texas. Before coming to Tarrant County College, Carly worked as a tutor at Texas Woman's University's Write Site and The Pioneer Center for Student Excellence. She also worked as a Bookseller at Barnes and Noble where she managed projects in the Music and DVD department. In her free time, Carly enjoys engaging in creative activities such as painting, photography, and writing. She also enjoys spending time with her family (cats included) watching films and visiting various museums.

PLAGIARISM AWARENESS MONTH AT UTD

Only you can prevent plagiarism! Writing Center staff at UT Dallas offered a series of workshops aimed at educating students on the need to cite sources in their papers. The month long event culminated in a campfire trivia night where students played pub-style trivia and answered questions about citation styles, best writing practices, and fire safety (just because).

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON PEER TUTORING IN
WRITING:** Nov 1-4, 2018,
South Padre Island

SOUTH CENTRAL WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION

CONFERENCE: Feb 21-23,
2019, University of Mary
Hardin-Baylor

NTWCA SPRING CONFERENCE:

Date TBD, University of
Texas at Dallas