

3-2014

Centering Our Stories: Applying Spatial Metaphors to Writing Center Publicity

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Recommended Citation

Nall, Stacy O., "Centering Our Stories: Applying Spatial Metaphors to Writing Center Publicity" (2014). *Purdue Writing Lab/Purdue OWL Graduate Student Presentations*. Paper 1.
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**The Stories We Tell:
Narratives, Institutional Discourse, and the
Public Documents of Writing Centers**

Part I:

**Centering our Stories: Applying
Spatial Metaphors to Writing
Center Publicity**

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CCCC 2014 Indianapolis

Centering our Stories

How can writing centers use digital spaces to position themselves as assets to their campus and local communities? While most writing centers have pages on their universities' websites, there continue to be new ways that writing centers can take advantage of these spaces to make their work more visible to wider publics.

One way they can do so is through publishing stories about and by the people with whom they partner.

Data + Stories = More Engaging Public Documents

- Writing centers often use data when publicizing their successes and contributions.
- Less common in many of their public documents (websites, annual reports, etc.) are stories.
- Through adding stories about students, tutors, and faculty, writing centers can craft more nuanced and engaging narratives about their work.

Storytelling in Non-Profits

- Writers in the field of non-profit management emphasize the importance of storytelling.
- Data impart credibility, but it's stories that people remember.
- Non-profit stories have a setting, multiple protagonists, and an inciting incident (the organization's "Why").

Spatial Metaphors and the “Why” of Writing Centers

- Storehouse
- Garret
- Burkean Parlor
- Liminal/Third Space/Borderland

Writing Centers as Liminal Spaces

According to Bonnie Sunstein, “We find ourselves everywhere and nowhere. We house programs to ‘write across the curriculum,’ to serve ESL, LD, and non-traditional students, to link full-time and part-time faculty, to employ students as tutors, to tutor faculty.”

Showcasing WCs as Collaborative and Liminal Spaces

How can writing centers:

- make visible their successes with collaborative pedagogy?
- define themselves as a common ground for students, faculty, and other partners across academic and local communities?
- use websites and other digital spaces to amplify their value as Burkean Parlors and Borderlands?

How to Tell Stories

1. Tell it in pictures
2. Tell it in video
3. Tell it in writing
4. Tell it verbally
5. Have others tell it for you

“5 ways to Tell Your Nonprofit’s Story” <http://www.501creative.com/5-ways-tell-your-nonprofits-story>

Stories of Collaboration across the Curriculum and the Community

- Student Success Stories
- Stories from Faculty Across the Curriculum
- Stories from the Local Community
- Blogs, Digital Stories, Podcasts, Radio Shows
- Examples: University of Wisconsin-Superior; University of Colorado Denver; Texas A&M; DePaul University

Student Success Stories



The Writing Center

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The Writing Center

Student Success Stories

We see small successes every day, every hour across our locations — clearer sentence structure, more accurate citations, organization that better reflects established arguments. Sometimes, however, "success" feels a little bigger: a scholarship, study abroad program, or career opportunity; admission to a certificate or graduate program; a completed thesis or dissertation; a published manuscript or funded grant. This space is dedicated to celebrating those successes, *your* successes.

Scroll down to read these Student Success Stories:

Student Success Stories

During the Fall 2012 semester, the Writing Center helped **Lateefah** write the scholarship application essay that earned her a \$4,000 Global Study China Scholarship, which she's using to study abroad through the [Semester in Beijing](#) program.

Says Lateefah:

"The Writing Center helped me feel confident in my essay because they challenged me to be creative and think critically in order to craft a winner. Employees in the Center assisted me from the first draft to the final draft, and that support made me feel like a champion. Now I feel optimistic about any form of writing because I learned methods that will make me successful in college.

I give praise to the Writing Center because I know its employees genuinely want to see students succeed. I would not be a confident writer without it. Thanks to the wonderful assistance of the Writing Center, I am going to have the best experience of my college career in China!"

Stories Across the Curriculum

Writing Across the Curriculum

Page Tools


Digital Storytelling Project: Faculty, Staff, and Students on their Development as Writers


UW-Superior > Writing Across the Curriculum


The Writing across the Curriculum Program and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning have teamed up to support faculty, staff, and students in their creation of digital stories of their development as writers.


Through this means, we emphasize that we all, no matter our field of study, no matter if writing is our main pursuit, have illuminating stories to tell about the good times and the bad times in our development as writers: the times we've had writer's block, the times we struggled when learning to write effectively in a discipline that was new to us, the time we found just the right words to say what we meant.

On becoming a writer by UW Superior faculty, students and graduates

Dispelling Writers' Myth  (11:54 minutes), created by **Susie Isaksen**, Senior Lecturer Department of Writing and Library Science at UW-Superior.

Eleni's Story of Writing  (4:56 minutes), by **Dr. Eleni Pinnow**, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Department of Human Behavior, Justice and Diversity at UW-Superior.

Journey through Writing  (2:24 minutes), created by Amanda Kvam as a UW-Superior senior and Writing Center Tutor. She is a recent UW-Superior graduate.

Story of Writing Development  (3:02 minutes), created by Tim Rogentine as a UW-Superior senior and Writing Center Tutor.

Stories Across the Curriculum

University Writing Center

Aggies helping Aggies write & speak well



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Writing instruction in science versus liberal arts with Drs. Funkhouser and Ritter



June 2007

Howdy! I'm Mandy, and welcome to "Write Away," the faculty podcast of the Texas A&M University Writing Center, bringing you news, tips and ideas for making your students better, more innovative writers.

Today we're talking to Drs. Funkhouser and Ritter of the University Honors Programs. Dr. Funkhouser is a professor of biochemistry and Executive Director for the University Honors Programs, and Dr. Ritter is a Professor of Communication and Associate Director for the University Honors Programs.

Mandy — Dr. Ritter began by talking about the differences between science-related W courses and Liberal Arts courses, and how students think about each differently.



More in Write Away: Interviews with Faculty

Universal Design for Teaching, with Dr. Ann Gundy [Video] (April 2010)

The University Writing Center with Executive Director Dr. Valerie Balester (November 2009)

Aletheia, The Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy – with Dr. Scott Austin and editor Sylvia Allsup-Edwards (October 2009)

A Semester in Aggeland Part 2 – Interview with Students from the Texas A&M Galveston Writing Lab

Words of Wisdom

Stories from the Community

writing. thinking. collaborating. teaching. learning. blogging...

UCWbLing

a blog by the DePaul University Center for Writing-based Learning

About the UCWbL About UCWbLing

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2014

BY KEVIN KAUFFMAN

CATEGORIZED:
reflections on research

TAGGED:
Conservative Vice Lords, Jane Addams Hull House Museum, Lisa Junkin-Lopez, public history, radio depaul, scrawl radio, St. Joseph Missouri

Is It Public History? (Scrawl S9 E7)

Hello Scrawl Nation! For this week's episode, we welcomed to the studio Lisa Junkin-Lopez, who is currently serving as the Interim Director at the [Jane Addams Hull House Museum](#). Lisa also worked on the exhibit, *A Report to the Public: An Untold of the Story of the Conservative Vice Lords*, which won the Outstanding Public History Project Award from the National Council on Public History.



— L to R: Scrawlers Megan Deppen, Brandon Haskey; public historian, Lisa Junkin-Lopez; and Scrawler Kevin Kauffman

For our readers who might not be familiar with this field, Lisa helped us

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n. A weblog by...

The University Center for Writing-based Learning

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Your Stories

- Which spatial metaphors--storehouse, garret, borderland, etc.--most resonate with the aims and activities of your writing center? How might these metaphors help you to frame and amplify your centers' contributions to campus and local communities?
- How might you use memorable stories to publicize and promote your center? Who should narrate these stories? What are the best media, print or digital, for reaching your intended audiences?