Five Years of Writing Center Journal Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography

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Five years of Writing Center Journal Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography

Compiled by Kate Brown

Note: This bibliography complements and completes the 20-year bibliography that Albert DeCiccio and Joan Mullin ran in WCJ issue 20.2 (2000, 39-72). Thanks to the Writing Centers Research Project, a complete searchable database of the entire bibliography, 1980-2005, is available online at http://coldfusion.louisville.edu/webs/a-s/wcrp/wcjournal/search.cfm


Discusses the surprises, problems, and progress that occurred as a result of encouraging tutors to talk openly about race and to become more aware of the effects of race on writing center dynamics.

Investigates the way writing consultants develop both individual ethos and collective ethos through listserv discourse.

Argues for the importance of small-scale evaluation of writing centers and discusses six possible evaluation methods.

Discusses the use of reflection on practice during tutor training to move tutors toward student-centered rather than tutor-centered sessions.

Recognizes the necessity for tutors to employ more directive strategies interweaving global and local concerns in sessions with non-native English speakers.

Discusses the importance of listening as a rhetorical activity to help tutors better understand and be sensitive to student needs, specifically those of ESL students.

About the Author

Kate Brown is a second-year Ph.D. student and an Assistant Director of the Writing Center at the University of Louisville. She has recently completed a searchable online database of the Writing Center Journal, and she is looking forward to presenting her most recent research on tutor training at the February, 2006, Southeastern Writing Center Association conference in Chapel Hill, NC.

The Writing Center Journal Volume 26, No. 1 (2006) 83
Suggests that tutors and tutor trainers should recognize and discuss the presence of aggression in tutoring sessions that is often disguised in the peerness of tutoring.

Discusses the viability of the writing center in terms of its marginal position within the university.


Recommends reshaping the conceptual models of online writing centers.


Uses quantitative research methods to investigate the correlation between students' frequency of visits and their satisfaction with the writing center.


Encourages writing consultants to be more aware of the directive/non-directive continuum and to develop a flexible tutoring style in order to better address student needs.


Argues for viewing the writing center through the lens of queer theory in order to achieve a greater understanding for how epistemology affects students, writing center staff, and the writing center itself.


Provides examples of the ways tutors can interact meaningfully with current writing center theory including the use of analytical journals.


Outlines ideal working conditions for graduate student administrators in writing centers.

Discusses opportunities that will be available to writing centers in the future and offers suggestions for how writing centers can lead the way toward widespread educational improvement.


Gardner, Clinton R. Review. Taking Flight with OWLs: Examining Electronic Writing Center Work. Eds. James A. Inman and
Argues that we must move away from binaries present in much writing center theory that locates the writing center on the margins of the academy and recognize that the success of writing centers depends upon acknowledging their complementary relationship to the university.

Suggests that writing center tutors watch the clock less and conduct their sessions in epochal time, which allows for increased presence and learning on the parts of both tutor and student.

Argues that the depth and complexity of close vertical transcription makes it more appropriate than horizontal transcription for analyzing tutoring sessions.


Offers suggestions to ensure the viability of writing centers in the future, including integrating technology into the writing center and preparing writing centers to address larger numbers of ESL students.


Presents three models of writing center activities that extend to WAC thinking and writing skills.

Explains backwriting as a dialogic critique of hegemonic academic structure that can empower marginalized students and writing center practitioners, though it is often linked to plagiarism.

Through the lens of Rogers' diffusion theory, presents a way for writing center professionals to collaborate, with a focus on innovation rather than on technology itself.

Celebrates the success of writing centers while noting future challenges, such as changing student populations, technologies, and budgeting.

Presents an optimistic view of the future of writing centers as a central recruitment and retention tool for universities as well as a...
primary site for scholarly research on writing and broader academic issues.


Myers, Sharon A., "Reassessing the 'Proof-reading Trap': ESL Tutoring and Writing Instruction." 24.1 (2003): 51-70. Suggests that, in order to better address the needs of ESL students, tutors must work to develop a greater understanding of second language learning processes and a keen knowledge of the pedagogical grammar of English as a second language.

Newman, Beatrice Mendez. "Centering in the Borderlands: The Writing Center at Hispanic Serving Institutions." 23.2 (2003): 43-62. Explains that tutors must recognize the writing center's important role of orienting Hispanic borderlands students within the university, work to understand the challenges these students face, and become better equipped to meet their needs.

Or, Susan, and Margo Blythman. "The Process of Design is Almost Like Writing an Essay." 22.2 (2002): 39-54. Reveals the underexploited connections between writing processes and design processes, concluding that writing instructors should make use of these connections in order to change art and design students' attitudes toward the writing process.

Papay, Twila Yates. "Collaborating with a Difference: How a South African Writing Center Brings Comfort to the Contact Zone." 23.1 (2002): 5-22. Discusses writing consultants' transformation of universal concepts, such as collaboration, to address specific local needs.

Pemberton, Michael A., "Planning for Hypertexts in the Writing Center...Or Not." 24.1 (2003): 9-24. Explores the threat technology poses to writing centers and questions the necessity of preparing writing center tutors to address issues involved with creating and analyzing hypertext.


Petric, Bojana. "Students' Attitudes Towards Writing and the Development of Academic Writing Skills." 22.2 (2002): 9-27. Explores ESL graduate students' attitudes about writing and encourages both students and instructors to have greater awareness of their own as well as others' attitudes about writing.

Argues for the use of improvisation in non-Western writing center tutoring that draws on pedagogical theory but does not necessarily follow the prescriptive rules for tutoring many theories espouse.

Describes the intellectual and political components of the composition and writing-across-the-curriculum pedagogies.


Investigates tutor roles based on tutor, tutee, and instructor expectations.

Predicts the move from writing centers to multiliteracy centers with an expanded focus on written, oral, visual and multilingual communication.

Explains that the "safe house" idea of a writing center involves censorship on the part of the writing center staff, whereas a writing center environment encouraging open, sometimes disruptive, dialogue better reflects and upholds our First Amendment rights.

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Urges writing centers to continue to track and develop their contributions to academic culture.

Suggests that writing centers should look to Long's Reactive Behavior Patterns in order to better understand writer and writing center consultant behaviors.

Discusses research findings that writing center users procrastinate less on their writing, and that writing centers can be particularly helpful for students who have a high procrastination tendency.