

Colorado and Wyoming Writing Center Association Annual Conference

Engaging the Local: Writing Centers and Place-Based Learning

CSU Pueblo: Pueblo, CO

The Colorado State University Pueblo is pleased to host the Colorado and Wyoming Writing Center Association (CWWCA) Conference on April 24 – 25, 2020.

- Friday, April 24: workshops for writing center tutors and administrators
- Saturday, April 25: individual and panel presentations, workshops, and roundtables

Call for Proposals

The theme for the 2019 CWWCA Conference is “**Engaging the Local: Writing Centers and Place-Based Learning**,” and we encourage broad interpretations of that idea.

The field of Writing Center Studies is filled with spatial metaphors, theories, and concepts. We teach and tutor in writing studios, labs, and centers; practice pedagogies that function around contact zones and border identities; and debate whether or not we are on the margin, in the basement, or central to our disciplines. We invite proposals that address the concepts of engaging the local and using place-based learning in response to three distinct questions:

How does the space, place, and social environment of writing centers shape both our work and identity? The spatial metaphors we use to describe our centers has a direct correlation to how we understand our identity as a center as well as tutors and consultants. Is your center a lab? A clinic? Part of a library? A safe space? Many early writing centers took on the identity of the lab, a term that brought with it the epistemic notions and authority of the laboratories of the hard sciences. Early writing center scholars pushed back against this identity and endeavored instead to create safe spaces for the individualized teaching of writing. How is your space created? Is it open and sunny? Does it have walled-off cubicles? Comfy couches and coffee pots? The intentional design of our centers and spaces and places both enables and limits certain types of movement, interaction, and work.

How does a writing center’s institution (and affiliations within that institution) shape the center’s identity and practices? Many writing centers are affiliated with English departments or writing programs, while others are connected to learning commons or student affairs programming. How your writing center is connected to other parts of your institution, how it is funded, and what departments or programs it collaborates with all inform the work of your center. Is your center at an HBCU or HSI? Does your institution serve primarily first-generation, minority, or non-traditional students? Do you have a large veteran population? To be effective and truly serve students at a given institution, writing centers

must understand both institutional identity and student needs and then decide how to respond. Writing center practices vary greatly depending on the institutions and populations that they serve.

How are writing centers shaped by, limited by, or responsive to the needs of their surrounding community or communities? Beyond institutional demographics and affiliations, writing centers must also consider the larger communities that they exist within. Is your center located in a metropolitan area? In a rural community? Is your center serving a low-income or wealthy community? Do students need to leave school in order to work seasonal laborer jobs? Writing center missions and practices must account for the community writ large, even if your center never steps foot beyond the institution's walls. But for many centers, work in the community and with the community also becomes a central part of that center's identity and practices. What role does your center play in the surrounding community? What role could it play that it doesn't already? Why?

With these questions in mind, we invite proposals from peer and professional tutors, writing consultants, faculty, and administrators. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Examining the assumptions and limits of current tutoring practices in relation to local identities/needs and place-based learning
- Analyzing how issues of space, place, spatial metaphors, and material conditions impact writing center identity, mission, and practices
- Adopting/Adapting to institutional needs as a means of developing a center's work, outreach, and impact
- Accounting for, responding to, or integrating diversity into writing center hiring practices and professional development
- Fostering and supporting diversity in response to political actions that seek to undermine the success of diverse students/staff (DACA, LGBTQ+, immigrants, persons of color, etc.)
- Providing workshops and in-class presentations; creating training programs for tutors; working with ELL, non-traditional, first-generation, and students with disabilities
- Engaging multi-literacies and multimodalities; tutoring in languages other than English; tutoring in diverse environments or locations
- Identifying and engaging with a local community's needs, concerns, and people

Additionally, we invite proposals on topics that are of perennial interest to those who work in writing center.

PLEASE NOTE: Preference will be given to proposals that incorporate collaboration, group interaction, audience engagement, and hands-on activities.

Proposal Deadline

Proposals are due by January 31, 2020. Please visit <https://www.cwwca.com> for more information and to submit a proposal.

If you have any questions, please contact Chad Pickering, Conference Chair, at chad.pickering@csupueblo.edu.