

Call for Proposals
for the
42nd Annual East Central Writing Center Association
Conference
March 5th-7th, 2020
Marian University
Indianapolis, IN

Critical Literacies, Humanizing Connections

Featuring a Keynote Discussion with Dr. Vershawn Ashanti
Young

Within their work related to humanizing inquiry, Paris & Winn ask us to consider the process of humanization as one that centers knowledge generation on being a "worthy witness" (vii) to a range of experiences and as being a "friend who understands fully" (iv) the gifts, talents, desires, and concerns of those with whom we work. In numerous ways, this process of humanization describes the work of writing centers. Many writing centers invite writers of all abilities and backgrounds to come as they are, to collaborate, and to offer their unique perspectives and experiences toward the generation of new knowledge. How might our understanding of writing centers change if we consider writing centers as not just places of examination and support, but as sites in which learning begins to take on and reveal humanizing dimensions and critical inquiry?

At the 2020 East Central Writing Center Association Conference, we invite proposals that explore the role of writing centers as "cultural communities" (Powell et al.) that support and foster humanizing connections and critical literacies (Perry)—those literacies attuned to the investigation of power, privilege, and identity. We hope to share stories, experiences, and the scholarship of writing centers as sites of critical inquiry that support individual writing and literacy development, and we are excited to welcome Dr. Vershawn Ashanti Young to participate within this conversation.

We recognize that writing centers have historically critiqued power, generating lasting relationships and opportunities for writers to become more fully connected to themselves, to ideas, and to new and established communities. This process of humanization requires attention to the realities of power, privilege, and identity; therefore, we also seek proposals that explore the writing center as a space to examine and reimagine the critical literacies necessary to critique these concepts.

Our goal for the 2020 East Central Writing Center Association Conference is to explore the role of writing centers as places in which we model and learn to become "worthy

witnesses” to the struggles and accomplishments of writers. To that end, we seek stories and insights into the humanizing connections that are fostered, explored, and, at times, challenged in writing centers. Furthermore, we hope to explore and contextualize how writing centers might more fully embrace their ability to encourage humanizing experiences as part of the ongoing investigation of power, privilege, and identity

At the 42nd annual gathering of the East Central Writing Center Association, we aspire to model a collaborative and inclusive conference environment by encouraging a broad range of knowledges. We encourage scholarship that emerges from the oral and embodied traditions of storying (Collins; Smith): knowledge delivered through performance, oration, storytelling, slam poetry, theatrical interpretation, or another suitable medium. We also invite proposals that adhere to the commonly accepted genres of academic conferences, such as individual papers, panel proposals, and poster presentations.

Additionally, we encourage proposals that connect to and complicate these suggested questions and themes:

- Identity: What role does identity play within writing centers? Which identities are privileged? Which identities are over- or under-represented? What actions can be taken to address under-representation?
- Beyond Academia: How do we explore and practice the work of the writing center beyond academia?
- Social Action: What is the role of writing centers in fostering critical literacy? Should writing centers have a role in social justice actions? If so, how do we work towards this change?
- Meeting People Where They Are: Exploring non-traditional center locations and non-traditional pedagogies.
- Naming The Work: Peer tutors, consultants, writing coaches... what do we call ourselves? Do these titles matter? How is the labor of writing centers named and discussed? What do these names and discussions reveal or obscure?
- Storying: Which stories do we tell about writing centers? How should we tell them? Whose stories matter? Whose stories remain untold?

To highlight the emphasis of critical literacies and humanizing connections, the 2020 East Central Writing Center Association Conference will be held at Marian University and Riverside High School in Indianapolis, IN. Additional sessions will take place at the Flanner Community Writing Center. We encourage proposals that emerge from university, community, and K-12 spaces.

To submit a proposal, please visit www.marian.edu/ecwca2020 Questions should be directed to ecwca@marian.edu

Timeline:

Submission Deadline: December 15, 2019 (by midnight)
Proposal Acceptance Notification: January 13, 2020
Travel Grant Applications February 3, 2020 (by midnight)
Tutor Award Nominations Due: February 3, 2020 (by midnight)

Works Cited

- Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 3rd ed., vol. Routledge, Rout, 2009.
- Paris, Django, and Maisha Winn, editors. *Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry with Youth and Communities*. SAGE Publications, 2014.
- Perry, Kristen. "What Is Literacy? A Critical Overview of Sociocultural Perspectives." *Journal of Language & Literacy Education*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2012, pp. 50–71.
- Powell, Malea, et al. "Our Story Begins Here: Constellating Cultural Rhetorics." *enculturation*, 2014. <http://enculturation.net/our-story-begins-here>
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed., Zed Books, 2012.