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Constellations Across Cultural Rhetorics and Writing Centers

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In this article, I discuss the ways a cultural rhetorics approach to writing center work can be productive for writing center administrators and consultants to theorize ways that story is a productive, meaningful, and robust research methodology, and to help us consider the ways we tell our stories and how we arrange, accumulate, and constellate these stories alongside one another. To this end, I share practices from my own writing center that align with a cultural rhetorics orientation, as outlined by the Cultural Rhetorics Theory Lab and which Andrea Riley Mukavetz defines as

enact[ing] a set of respectful and responsible practices to form and sustain relationships with cultural communities and their shared beliefs and practices including texts, materials, and ideas. This orientation rejects the idea that “everything is a text” to be read and instead engages with the material, embodied, and relational aspects of research and scholarly production. One engages with texts, bodies, materials, ideas or space knowing that these subjects are interconnected to the universe and belong to a cultural community with its own intellectual tradition and history. (109)

I’d like to start with a few stories.

This is a story.1 Last week a colleague dropped by my office, knocking on my closed door. He was surprised when it opened, guessing that I was out of the office. I was, instead, just trying to limit outside disruption as I desperately tried to squeeze in some time for my own writing and scholarship. After he got over his surprise, he asked, “Do you have any statistics about the Writing Center?” I looked up and began to laugh, “Of course, I have statistics about the Writing Center. What kind of statistics do you need?” He is a friend as well as a colleague, so I knew his intentions were good ones, but I was bemused by the general request for “stats about the Writing Center.” Upon further reflection, his inquiry isn’t all that different from the advice I was given about writing the annual review for my Writing Center: “Include a lot of stats.” Value, then, is clearly attributed to numbers. In this situation my colleague indicated that “some people don’t understand what a big deal the Writing Center is” and wanted to have something concrete to show them, to somehow prove the worth and significance of the Center through “stats.” I understand the impulse. It’s a reality that part of how we in writing centers indicate our worth is through numbers, especially usage statistics, but statistics without the stories behind and alongside them are not particularly meaningful to me.

1 I use these words to draw attention to my work as story and to invoke a dear friend and mentor, Malea Powell, who has consistently shown me the value of story as scholarship (among other things).

2 I am grateful for the training I received from Trixie Smith at The Writing Center at Michigan
This is a story. Last fall one of my colleagues in linguistics, who was on sabbatical the previous year, learned that I was working with a linguistics student on an independent study focused on issues of power, language, and identity. In particular, the student is interested in looking into the ways Standard English is quite literally oppressive and considering what that means for writing centers and the ways we interact with writers. The faculty member, my student told me, was concerned that since I am not a linguist that perhaps someone else should teach the independent study. It’s true; I am not a linguist.

A week or so after my student, in a state of some distress, shared this information with me, the faculty member in question dropped by my office to chat about the independent study. In this conversation, she doesn’t link my lack of linguistic training to her concern but instead laments that there are “other people here who specialize in these areas” and goes on to name one colleague in our department’s writing & literacy concentration and well as herself. She does not ask me what my primary scholarly training is in or what my current scholarly projects are. She clearly does not think that writing centers address issues of power, language, and identity. At the time, I had been braced to address her concern about my lack of linguistic training and so did not confront her about her assumptions about my field of study. I’m now frustrated with myself. What does a writing center do if not get knee deep, neck deep, buried, day-to-day, everyday, all day in issues of power, language, and identity?

The stories above indicate misunderstandings of writing center studies and writing center practices. The first is a story about how numbers are valued more than stories, even though we know that humanities scholarship cannot be reduced to numbers. It’s often the case that even humanities scholars do not have issues with reducing writing centers to numbers without stories. In the second story, there is an indication that writing centers aren’t seen as places where power dynamics are relevant or important despite the fact that power influences all of our interactions with writers. My hope is that these stories and the others I share throughout the article emphasize the “material, embodied, and relational aspects of research and scholarly production” (Riley Mukavetz 109) that characterize both cultural rhetorics and writing center work. As the editors of this special issue have noted in the call,

One of the most effective, but often under theorized, ways of understanding the relationships we build in writing center spaces is through the use of story. We tell stories about who we are, how we connect with clients, administrators, and other consultants. These stories are often representative of the relationships themselves and, as such, cannot be separated from them.

Writing center directors and consultants have long shared stories like mine. Although writing centers have a history of sharing stories about their work as scholarship, there has been a push in recent years for more RAD research that includes replicable methods, aggregative results, and data-driven conclusions. It is certainly productive to do RAD research, but for some the emphasis on RAD has pushed storied writing center research into the category of anecdote, as not really research. Instead, we should take up the call provided by the editors of this special issue and theorize our stories and our storying.

It’s somewhat funny that writing center professionals are both told that their scholarship is too anecdotal, too storied, and then at the same time told that we’re actually kind of bad at telling our stories. Jackie Grutsch McKinney explores this issue in her book Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers. She writes,

writing center work is complex, but the storytelling of writing center work is not. By and large, the way that writing center scholars, practitioners, and outsiders talk
about writing center work fits into a relatively familiar pattern... I call it the writing center grand narrative, which goes something like this: *writing centers are comfortable, iconoclastic places where all students go to get one-to-one tutoring on their writing.* (3, emphasis in the original)

As a writing center director and someone who has been in the world of writing centers for over a decade, I’m far less concerned with the claim that writing centers focus on work that is too storied, too anecdotal, and more concerned that—as Grutsch McKinney indicates—we are not particularly good at telling the stories that get at the rich and complicated work that we do.\(^2\)

In what follows, I describe the ways that a cultural rhetorics orientation can enhance the ongoing efforts of Writing Center Studies and individual writing centers to 1) examine and interrogate our lore to recognize and resist master narratives, 2) employ story to change our practice, 3) embrace decolonial and antiracist pedagogy, methodology, and scholarship, and 4) practice relationality and reciprocity. In particular, I discuss the way cultural rhetorics has informed the infrastructure I have built with my staff of writing consultants, which includes a semester-long training course, biweekly staff meetings, and a robust committee structure. In general, this means that at our Center we recognize that “relationships do not merely shape reality, they *are* reality” (Wilson 7, emphasis original) through the very values Riley Mukavetz lauds as central to a cultural rhetorics methodology, those of community, respect, and reciprocity.

**Examining and Interrogating Our Lore to Recognize and Resist Master Narratives**

The stories we tell about our work shape the way we understand our work, but they also shape the expectations of others—consultants, student writers, faculty, our peers. As Grutsch McKinney indicates, “I think the telling has become so naturalized, so transparent, that we no longer recognize our tellings and retellings as one of many possible representations. Instead, telling the familiar writing center story is just what we do” (4). While there is truth to the master narratives that we repeat, they create harmful interpretations of our work. For instance, a mantra common to writing centers is that “our job is to produce better writers, not better writing” (North 438). While the intent is to show that at writing centers we focus on the long-term development of the writer, the phrase implies that the writers we work with are working through a deficit, that their writing needs attention. Often faculty indicate their surprise when student writers who don’t “need” to visit the Center make appointments, and I’m concerned the emphasis on “better” in North’s well-intentioned piece reinforces the notion that writing center interactions should be based on need. As Nancy Grimm shares, the phrase often

> Function[s] as a hold-harmless clause to protect writing centers against the red-faced professor who strides in exclaiming, “I can’t believe this paper ‘went through’ the writing center!” Yet not surprisingly, it deflects attention from the writing center and the professor’s misguided expectations and instead places it squarely on the individual student writer who uses a writing center. It also promotes a peculiar form of individualized instruction, one that proposes to change the identity of the writer, making him or her “better” (87, emphasis in the original).

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\(^2\) I am grateful for the training I received from Trixie Smith at The Writing Center at Michigan State University that emphasized the need to always tell the stories that help us understand the numbers/statistics.
So, how do we share the affordances of visiting our writing centers with students and work with faculty to understand that writing centers are not a catchall for addressing their uneven expectations for student writers? Recognizing the ways we employ master narratives such as these can help us resist them.

The attempt on North’s part to focus on the practice of writing and not the product is one we all likely embrace. The emphasis on practice is one shared across writing centers, writing studies, and cultural rhetorics. Cultural rhetorics in particular emphasizes that Rhetoric and rhetorics are built on practices and that those practices are relational. As the Cultural Rhetorics Theory Lab writes,

> All cultural practices are built, shaped, and dismantled based on the encounters people have with one another within and across particular systems of shared belief. In other words, people make things (texts, baskets, performances), people make relationships, people make culture.

It is a focus on practice and on relationships not on texts themselves or even individual writers that writing centers emphasize. A concern seems to be: how do we do emphasize the practice of writing without providing a value judgment—come to the writing center to be a better writer, to improve!—while encouraging students who might like the notion of “improvement” to actually visit our centers. Unfortunately, the notion that visiting writing centers can “improve” writers is persuasive to student writers and faculty.

As Riley Mukavetz reminds us, “All research practices, methods, and theories are culturally located and specific” (122). Our narratives and practices around “improvement” in writing centers are manifestations of an institutional rhetoric that asks faculty, departments, and colleges to see themselves as part of a process that “helps” students grow, develop, change, mature, improve, and so on. Unfortunately, the notion of “helping”—much like the notion of “better” above—is actually quite problematic. Nancy Grimm notes that the propensity to describe writing center work as “helping” neutralizes the hierarchy and power of our positions within a system of advantage/disadvantage based on race. Within this system, those of us who are white and/or middle class (no matter how well-intentioned and helpful) automatically carry privilege. (79)

An emphasis on practice isn’t enough if the practices we engage in do harm instead of good. While we purport to “help” and “support” and “develop” writers, we are actually reinforcing dangerous pedagogies and mindsets.

**Employ Story to Change Practice**

At this point, I have indicated that we need to develop an awareness of how our master narratives and practices reinforce problematic approaches to writing center work. Awareness, of course, is a first step. We must also use story or, rather, stories in the plural to change our practices. A cultural rhetorics approach is productive since it focuses “on how specific cultures are built around particular beliefs and practices, which lead that culture to value some things and not others” (Cultural Rhetorics Theory Lab). For me, addressing these concerns starts with consultant education, as consultants are engaged the most visible part of our writing center’s day-to-day work through their one-to-one interactions with student writers.

Writing consultants, frequently undergraduate students who embrace mainstream notions of “good writing” and “proper grammar,” often reinforce notions of remediation and “bettering oneself” through writing center visits, understanding the notion of “Standard English” as a value-neutral good instead of seeing it as a tool that marks, unnecessarily and unfairly, marginalized
people and languages, rooting problems in the performance of individuals instead of systemic practices. Grutsch McKinney points out that “beginners will start by mimicking the writing center grand narrative, and so many in the community are always beginners, does this explain why the narrative has such lasting power? In Bartholomae's words, are we constantly inventing and reinventing the writing center the same way?” (85). She posits, “If a majority of those engaging in writing center discourse stay for only a few years, do they—do we—ever move beyond this?” (85). If we hope to move beyond it, we need to use our stories to change our practices within our consultant education programs.

I am grateful to have a writing center education course that both undergraduate and graduate students are required to take before becoming writing consultants at the writing center I direct. The course is officially called “writing fellows seminar” but I call it “writing center theory and practice.” It’s semester-long course of three credits for undergraduates and four credits for graduate students. The course involves significant reading in writing center theory, usually two to four academic articles situated in writing centers, writing studies, and rhetoric and writing each week, and consistent interaction in the Center itself through at least two hours of weekly observations and co-consultations.

As I teach it, each week in the course has a theme. The themes across the course overlap, accumulate, and reinforce one another. I’ve reshaped the types of ideas I foreground in the course over the years. Until a few semesters ago, I allocated just one week to an explicit focus on “supporting English as a Second Language (ESL) writers.” Reading the excellent work in Laura Greenfield and Karen Rowan’s *Writing Centers and the New Racism* made evident to me that I was doing more harm than good by reinforcing a practice that marginalized a particular population of writers and was at odds with my supposed orientation to the discipline in which I claim that I work to empower student writers. I was treating multilingual writers as though they were a scourge to be “managed” and “dealt with.” I’ve begun to address this particular misstep by thinking about the language I use to describe writers and writing, choosing to rename the theme as “language diversity in the writing center,” allocating more time in the class to explicitly discussing language diversity and decolonial and anti-racist pedagogies, and constellating across the themed weeks throughout the semester to make the relationships among them more obvious to my students.

In class, I tell stories about my missteps, those in the distant past as well as those, unfortunately, that are far more recent when it comes to noticing my own complicity in problematic practices. I ask students to read about issues of power and identity in writing centers throughout the semester. We read about writing center history in Elizabeth Boquet’s “Our Little Secret.” We address myths perpetuated by academic communities in Laura Greenfield’s “The ‘Standard English’ Fairytale,” Vershawn Ashanti Young’s “Should Writers Use They Own English?,” and Rusty Barrett’s “Be Yourself Somewhere Else.” We discuss how writing pedagogies for mainstream writers and multilingual writers are similar through texts such as Jennifer Staben and Kathryn Dempsey Nordhaus’s “Looking at the Whole Text.” We take a look at what writing center education is and can be through texts such as Nancy Grimm’s “Re theorizing Writing Center Work to Transform a System of Advantage Based on Race” and Sarah Blazer’s “Twenty-first Century Writing Center Staff Education.” We imagine possibilities the work in our own writing center through Jackie Grutsch McKinney’s *Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers*, Lauren Fitzgerald’s “Undergraduate Writing Tutors as Researchers,” and Bradley Hughes, Paula Gillespie and Harvey Kail’s “What They Take with Them.”
When we talk about the texts, we do so in the context of our own experiences in our Center and the lived experiences that the students carry with them in and outside the Center. As Phill Bratta and Malea Powell indicate, cultural rhetorics work is “rooted in a desire to change the traditional narratives, canons, and ways of operating in the discipline in order to explicitly open academia to ideas and intellectual affordances from a much broader range of continental and global cultures.” It is my hope that constellating readings from linguistics, writing studies, writing center studies, and other fields alongside the lived experiences of consultants-in-training can lead to this kind of change in our Center and perhaps writing center studies. Through constellative practice “sustainable frames for rhetorical practices” can be created which “emphasize the degree to which knowledge is never built by individuals but is, instead, accumulated through collective practices within specific communities” (Bratta and Powell); in the case of writing center studies, those practices begin with the way we enculturate new consultants into our communities. The practices we engage in within consultant education shape the stories we tell and carry forward; they shape the ways we practice writing center work.

**Embrace Decolonial and Antiracist Pedagogy, Methodology, and Scholarship**

A cultural rhetorics emphasis on practice is consistent with Nancy Grimm’s position that it is important “to move from a writing center that places emphasis on ‘changing students’ to one that ‘changes communities,’ from one that ‘locates problems in students’ to one that locates problems in ‘competing contexts and different ways of making meaning’” (93). To that end, conversations about problematic but normalized practices we engage in and how to shift those practices cannot stop after initial writing center education. Education efforts must be consistent and ongoing. I agree wholeheartedly with Sarah Blazer who writes that,

> No other area of our work is more important than the learning we do with our staffs, specifically the staff education we design, experience, and reflect on. Our best chance to see a transformative ethos embodied in our everyday practice is to facilitate opportunities for staff learning that are in sync with the difficult content of this work. (25)

Central to this work, for me, is working toward a decolonial practice in writing centers, that is to “delink from the colonial imposition of a need for using Western canonical frameworks, methodologies, and theories to understand cultures and practices” (Bratta and Powell). This is not easy work, as it asks us to constantly attend to practices that might seem, at first, neutral.

When I first began directing the Center, I realized that there were a number of practices that seemed to send messages that contradicted what I understood to be writing center values. More experienced staff members were allowed to skip staff meetings as they were “done” with training and, evidently, needed no ongoing professional development. Consultants would often schedule appointments on behalf of students, even though our stated mission was to enhance student agency and responsibility. Valuable writing center activities other than consulting were easily abandoned if a student writer came in requesting a walk-in appointment reinforcing the notion the work of writing centers is only consulting one-to-one with writers. Individually, these were small issues, but taken together they made for a bundle of contradictions. As Blazer writes, “To make even small shifts, though, requires time, reflection, and careful attention to the ways that everyday, small acts relate to our philosophical stances” (46). In the past few years, we’ve moved away from many of these problematic practices, but what about those that we don’t see?

In the Center, we now work to embrace decolonial pedagogies, methodologies, and scholarship by engaging in frequent conversation and interaction about our practices. The staff
meets for two-hour professional development workshops and meetings every two weeks. More than a few of our staff meetings over the past year specifically attended to decolonial pedagogies and attention to language diversity. Here is a sampling of topics from the past year: Discussion of Blazer’s “Twentieth Century Writing Center Education”; Guest speaker on Translingual Practice and Heritage Languages; Code-Meshing Discussion; Power, Language, and Identity Workshop and Discussion of Greenfield’s “The ‘Standard English’ Fairytale.”; Decolonizing Methodologies in the Writing Center. The meetings include interactive workshops guided by consultants and include dialogue around our practices; sometimes they are mediated by scholarly texts.

In addition to the staff meetings, consultants spend ten to twenty percent of their weekly hours engaged in project time pertaining to one of our committees. The committees were created to provide a structure from which consultants could continue inquiry into writing center work that sustains and improves current programming and builds new programming; their existence also challenges the master narrative Grutsch McKinney warns about by making visible the non-consulting work that happens in our writing center and writing centers in general. The committees are digital resources and online consulting, language and cultural diversity, research and assessment, and writing across the curriculum and outreach.

While each committee has a unique focus, their work overlaps. The language and cultural diversity committee has the clearest connection to decolonial work; their recent accomplishments include hosting a conversation about the importance of employing international students as writing consultants in the Center and how our language backgrounds influence the ways we perceive and interact in the world. While the other committees have a less obvious association with decolonial pedagogies, methodologies, and scholarship, they play an important role in this work, too. For instance, the research and assessment committee has worked with me to develop four assessment instruments that provide us with data about how our actual practices match up with our values. They include a client survey, a consultant self-assessment, focus groups about writing center administration, and ongoing observations of each consultant during one-to-one consulting. Paying attention to how we do our work can help us address concerning practices that we might not otherwise notice.

Together, the structure of the committees and the staff meetings are intended to consistently address writing center practice and ask us to become aware of and question the ways we work with writers. As the director, I frequently return to an excerpt from Elizabeth Boquet’s 1999 article “Our Little Secret”; she writes, “In general our field has failed to consider writing centers an appropriate area of inquiry into composition’s politics of location, yet writing centers remain one of the most powerful mechanisms whereby institutions can mark the bodies of students as foreign, alien to themselves” (465, emphasis mine). I worry that my staff and I sometimes find ourselves using language about how the writing center can “help” and get caught up in conversations with student writers and faculty about writers that “struggle” or “need support.” Like Grimm, I see the work I’ve done and continue to do with my staff as being part of a “shift in how we conceptualize the learning that happens in the writing center” (77). A significant part of this shift, this delinking, is recognizing that we are never done learning that we will make mistakes and that we need to work together to achieve change.

**Practice Relationality and Reciprocity, Working with and alongside**

Writing centers are about human relationships and require attention to storied experiences. This article acknowledges the hard work that goes into working with and among a
complicated, contradictory, human community and posits that true decolonial work in writing centers requires the presence of a cultural rhetorics emphasis in more writing center scholarship. I want to return to and emphasize what Andrea Riley Mukavetz has written about how through a cultural rhetorics orientation “one engages with texts, bodies, materials, ideas, or space knowing that these subjects are interconnected to the universe and belong to a cultural community with its own intellectual tradition and history” (109). The focus here is on relationships not on static objects but on interactions and connections across time and space.

Probably the most common refrain my staff hears from me about our work is that in writing centers we are humans working with other humans. It might sound silly or obvious, but far more important to me than the texts that writers bring in are the relationships we develop with writers and that they develop with us and with their writing, as practices that are part of their approach to their writing and the world. One of the ways I attend to these relationships in my own practices as a writing center director is to work alongside consultants on developing writing center programming and scholarship. Consultants are encouraged to develop workshops that engage their peers in conversation, to invest time in research about writing and language and the people who write and use language, to present at conferences, and to write scholarly essays. I model these practices, but I also collaborate with consultants. I do this for many reasons but a few include that through these activities I am building and strengthening my relationships to the humans I work with and to work we share. Through these activities I am also indicating that I can learn from my students, that mentoring relationships do not have to be hierarchical.

This is a story. As I was drafting this essay, a writing consultant named Sydney Sparks knocked on my door. She is the one who took the independent study with me last fall. She’s currently in a course focused on Written Englishes and has been sharing boldly and comfortably in class about language diversity, a topic she’s noticed can be silencing for many students. The professor approached her about sharing some of the work she has done in previous coursework and guiding a class discussion, which prompted her to share with him the piece she wrote for the independent study. He read it and wrote back to her, asking why she had written it the way she did, with so many stories. That led her to my office. She came to me to borrow a book that she wanted to reference in her message back to him. I later asked her if she was willing to share her response to the professor and if she would mind having it included in this article. She happily obliged. In her message, she wrote about her experience with the independent study, explaining that as well as learning about different dialects and Englishes, I looked into different research methods. Shawn Wilson's Research is Ceremony and Malea Powell's "Listening to Ghosts" influenced my decision to write as I did. Wilson is an Indigenous researcher; his book is about Indigenous research paradigms of Canada and Australia, namely, that Indigenous researchers understand that they are connected to their research. When they share their work, those they share it with are then connected with them. Powell's piece is about alternative discourses in academia, specifically discourses rooted in American Indian traditions. She writes about how, oftentimes, academics feel the need to distance themselves from their work when, in reality, they are very connected to their work and should embrace and use that connection in their research and presentation of it.

I chose to use my stories to show my research because my stories are what made me care about my work and, I believe, what make others care about my work. My hope for the piece was that my audience would be able to learn what I
learned, in the context I learned it in. By using my stories, I hoped that my readers would engage in my research and connect with it. I tried to show that there is no standard English and that the idea of one is in fact racist and oppressive on many levels.

Sydney’s experiences inside and outside the writing center shaped the writing she created for her independent study and those stories are continuing to find their way out into the world. She shared them at the East Central Writing Centers Association Conference, with this semester’s Writing Center Theory and Practice students, and with her Written Englishes professor. I learned from her stories and others have, too. These stories contribute to important intellectual and cultural work surrounding writing centers. Through our readings, writings, conversations, and interactions, through our stories, we are making knowledge together as a community.

Concluding by Constellating

As Boquet, Grutsch McKinney, and Grimm have pointed out, it’s important to be wary of the kinds of stories we tell about ourselves, but we should also embrace multiple stories of writing center practice. There isn’t one story of our work but many. Instead of replacing the ubiquitous stories Boquet, Grutsch McKinney, and Grimm have reminded us of with a different dominant story, we should consider how to constellate stories of our lived experiences and practices in productive ways. Writing center work is most certainly caught up in center/margin binaries that could benefit from the practice of constellation advocated by cultural rhetorics. The Culture Rhetorics Theory Lab explains that a constellation allows for all the meaning-making practices and their relationships to matter. It allows for multiply-situated subjects to connect to multiple discourses at the same time, as well as for those relationships (among subjects, among discourses, among kinds of connections) to shift and change without holding a subject captive.

Through constellation we can name each other as “intellectual relatives” (Cultural Rhetorics Theory Lab); here are just a few named in this article Blazer, Boquet, Greenfield, Grimm, Grutsch McKinney, Wilson, Powell, Riley Mukavetz, and Sparks.

Cultural work is exhausting. Working with people, emotions, and various creative and meaning-making processes alongside institutional and social expectations and hierarchies is absolutely draining. I return to this article after an unexpected hiatus related to the confluence of a death in the family and preparations for the semester’s teaching and writing center orientation. The scenario shared by Lisa Ede almost thirty years ago sounds familiar:

For a variety of reasons, those of us who direct or work in writing centers have seldom been able to articulate theoretical support for our work that goes beyond the basic principles of collaborative learning. The most common reasons for this failure, of course, is that we have been too busy working ourselves to death—running centers on inadequate or even nonexistent budgets, functioning as director, secretary, tutor, and public relations expert all at once—to take time to theorize. (Lisa Ede qtd in Grutsch McKinney 44).

Writing Center scholarship is difficult to produce because directors are often pulled into too many directions and duties that are seen as administrative are not understood to be scholarly; our collective research agenda is stymied both because scholars are not hired as administrators (or administrators are not paid to be scholars) and because our gaze has more or less kept us, in large part, from substantial theoretical and empirical
research on aspects of writing center work beyond tutoring. (Grutsch McKinney 85)

The work of writing centers is never over and is often invisible. The lack of specific curriculum or clear products reinforces the misunderstanding that writing centers are a neat and tidy support service where writers enter with rather straightforward writing-related questions, such as, “How do I cite a website using MLA?” and leave with similarly straightforward answers. Instead, it’s much more likely that alongside any questions with clear answers, writers and consultants are addressing issues of power and identity, have been marked as different or in need of help, and are juggling courses and work and generally just trying to get by.

We need to keep telling our stories. The Cultural Rhetorics Theory Lab writes, “It is one thing to ask, ‘What makes scholarship between disciplinary communities different?’ It is another to ask, ‘What do we learn when we understand what they have in common?’ This is the heart of our project.” My hope is that this article has shown connections between cultural rhetorics and writing centers through stories and constellations. By embracing a cultural rhetorics orientation that emphasizes telling and constellating stories, writing centers can challenge and resist master narratives, embrace decolonial and antiracist pedagogies, methodologies, and scholarship, practice relationality and reciprocity, and change practices.

Works Cited


Works Noted


