

**Title:**

CW/WC: Exploring (Dis)Similarities in Creative Writing and Writing Center Practice

**Abstract:**

Writing center practitioners have posited that creative exercises can help writers to overcome blocks in their writing process, and it has been established that a savvy writing center may take advantage of the presence of creative writers on its staff to encourage other creative writers to use the center. However, much of the writing center-based scholarship in this vein addresses the value of creativity itself for writing instruction—not creative writing as a discipline with distinct practices and knowledge. This roundtable is interested in exploring the overlapping pedagogies and practices that create these disciplinary cousins.

**Proposal:**

Writing centers have historically occupied a fruitfully (and at times frustratingly) liminal place with respect to the academy; they share this discomfort with creative writing programs. When working well, both entities are often disloyal to the gatekeeping and drive to standardize that students often face, and both can offer students a rare and important opportunity: to have their work read closely—to be taken seriously as writers. In creative writing workshops, as in one-with-one writing center appointments, a student's writing is given intensive, personalized attention by their readers. While scholars of composition and creative writing pedagogy have speculated about the points of (dis)connection between their two ecologies of practice (Aryal 2017; Peary 2012; Sumpter 2016) the relationship between the praxes of writing centers and creative writing is overdue for examination.

Writing center practitioners have posited that incorporating creative exercises into one-with-one writing center appointments can help writers to overcome blocks in their writing process (Anderson 2020). Exercises like writing from a different perspective or writing the thesis to an academic essay as a tweet are proposed as techniques to help writers connect to their writing tasks and discover their writerly agency. However, rather than drawing on the craft knowledge of creative writing practitioners, much of the writing center-based scholarship in this vein addresses the value of creativity itself for writing instruction—there is actually very little engagement with the potential of creative writing qua creative writing to inform writing center practice. While it has been established that a savvy writing center may take advantage of the presence of creative writers on its tutoring staff to encourage other creative writers to use the center as a site of feedback and support for their expressive work (Birnbaum and Kaufmann

1996), the potential for writing center practice to inform creative writing pedagogy has not been explored to its potential. This roundtable is interested in exploring crossovers between the pedagogies and practices that create these disciplinary cousins.

Our participants are consultants and administrators at the University of Georgia (UGA) Writing Center. We will share our experiences both as writing center practitioners and as creative writers. Our creative writing experience is varied and will enable us to speak to this topic from a range of (un)disciplined perspectives: Saurabh Anand is a doctoral student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at UGA. In addition to pursuing his own passion for creative writing practice and consulting with the UGA Writing Center, he researches and writes about Worldglobal Englishes and teaches a pedagogy course for international graduate students who are preparing to teach in a North American university environment. While working in the UGA Writing Center during the Fall 2021 semester, Savannah Jensen co-organized and facilitated a series of workshops exploring the translingual possibilities latent in multilingual creative writing practice. She also teaches first-year writing and British literature at UGA. Emma Catherine Perry has an MFA in poetry and is pursuing a PhD in creative writing while serving as the Assistant Director of the UGA Writing Center. She has taught both creative and critical writing at the college level for ten years.

#### Works Cited

- Anderson, Annesley. "Helping Students See Themselves as Writers: Creative Writing Exercises in the Writing Center." *Writing Lab Newsletter*, vol. 44, no. 9-10, June 2020, pp. 26–29.
- Aryal, Khem Kumar. "Rewriting the Creative: Toward a Happenings Theory of Creative Composition." *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*, vol. 78, no. 3, University of Missouri, ColumbiaProQuest, Sept. 2017.
- Birnbaum, Lisa C, and Cathleen Kaufmann. "Becoming a Creative Writing Center." *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, vol. 20, no. 10, June 1996, pp. 6–7.
- Peary, Alexandria. "Spectators at Their Own Future: Creative Writing Assignments in the Disciplines and the Fostering of Critical Thinking." *The WAC Journal*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2012, pp. 65–81.
- Sumpter, Matthew. "Emerging Voices: Shared Frequency: Expressivism, Social Constructionism and the Linked Creative Writing-Composition Class." *College English* 78.4, 2016, pp 340-361.