The Florida Writing Symposium

Sponsored by

The Department of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Central Florida, The Council of Writing Program Administrators Florida Affiliate, and Bedford/St. Martin's

September 21st, 2012 - 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
University of Central Florida Student Union Building
8:30 AM Continental Breakfast
Cape Florida Ballroom, 316 Student Union Building

9:00-9:30 Welcome to the Symposium
Cape Florida Ballroom 316
Karita France dos Santos, Bedford/St. Martin’s
Elizabeth Wardle, University of Central Florida

9:30-10:30 Keynote Address
Cape Florida Ballroom 316
Why We Write: How Ordinary Citizens (Can) Change the World
Shannon Carter, Texas A&M University-Commerce
Introduction: Elizabeth Wardle, University of Central Florida

In 1912, the lead article for the very first issue of English Journal began with a question that remains of vital concern for us today, exactly one hundred years later: "Can Good Composition Teaching Be Done Under Present Conditions?" Of course the answer is always and unequivocally "yes." Good work will always be done because good teachers will always --indeed have always --ensured that students learn, regardless of "present conditions."

The exigency that gave rise to the 1912 study and sustains related 2012 concerns, however, suggests a different line of questioning as well, one that serves as a focal point for the current presentation. For me, the question is not just can good composition teaching happen or even how teachers might do so but, in fact, how might writing work to actually change unfavorable conditions. As one productive response to this question, I turn to a historical example of undergraduates who helped transform a rural university town with a series of unassigned, ungraded texts: the Afro-American Student Society of East Texas (ASSET) in 1968.

The presentation will include a short documentary about these writers with close attention to the complexities of 1968, one of the most tumultuous years in American history. I end with a set of basic lessons to be drawn from these historical examples as they inform current challenges. Throughout, I emphasize the role played by ordinary, everyday writers brought together by a network of texts, largely local in circulation and often ephemeral in nature. This is why we write, why we must keep writing, and why we teach literate social action in an increasingly uncertain world.

“A Clear Channel” is available online at http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/RRT/RRT_Remix2.html

10:30-10:45 Break
Cape Florida Ballroom 316

10:45-11:45 Panel Discussion
Cape Florida Ballroom 316
Preparing Secondary Students for College Writing and Learning
Miriam Gregorio, Language Arts – Reading, Barracuda Team - 8th Grade, Language Arts Dept. Head, Neptune Middle School; Tierney Miller, Lake Howell High School; Vassiliki Zygouris-Coe, Associate Professor of Education, UCF

Moderator: Kathleen Bell, University of Central Florida

The panelists will discuss the following essential question: "Given the existing constraints, what can we do to prepare students for college and career writing?" Each panelist will share from her perspective, insights, and current role and responsibilities. Panelists will also address key questions to guide and facilitate ongoing dialogue with secondary school teachers and college faculty.

11:45-12:45 Lunch
Cape Florida Ballroom 316
1:00 - 1:50  Workshop Session I

A. Colin Charlton, Jonikka Charlton, University of Texas Pan-American

Reflections/Directions: MetaCurricula in Developmental Reading/Writing Classrooms
Garden Key Room 221

When we walk into a potential learning space, whether it's a physical classroom at the beginning of the semester or an intellectual prompt in the form of an unfamiliar question, we are all "developmental." We face uncertainty and to survive, if even for a moment, we reflect on how we learn to learn, making new connections. Much of what circulates about developmental classrooms, those liminal spaces imbued with the question of readiness, frames the work of teachers and students with "lack." We offer a meta-curricular frame as an alternative, one through which we ask students to reflect on and study their reading, writing, and learning in the contexts of what reading and writing professionals have discovered. In this way, we see students begin to better direct their relationships to reading, writing, and learning. In groups, we'll ask you to discuss how you introduce students to reading and writing through initial assignments, and then we'll share and discuss as a larger group how those introductions might work as meta-moments to engage students, for instance, with self-study in larger context of writing studies.

B. Doug Downs, Montana State University

Cape Florida Ballroom 316

Helping Students Read as Critical Citizens

In writing-about-writing pedagogy, we are centrally concerned with helping students read, and thus converse with, complex, advanced texts that lie at the edge of their reading abilities -- and teachers around the country are having good success in helping students build their abilities to handle these texts. Less noticed, perhaps, is that students need similar development of a wider set of reading strategies to critically participate in the civil discourse of a culture dominated by the cacophony of web-based, 24/7 interchange. For civic participation, we have to teach students the same kind of source evaluation and meaning-constructing strategies as we do for academic research, but in a perhaps even more difficult space: the blogosphere, twitter-verse, and thicket of competing claims, squirrelly data, and irresponsible overstatements that make up the bulk of web-enabled American public discourse. In the first half of this talk and discussion session, I begin by dramatizing what students are up against and the reading habits and resources with which they typically face this wall of noise. From that, I identify a range of habits, resources, and strategies we would do well to be teaching them. In the second half of the session, I facilitate audience discussion of ideas for teaching these necessary reading strategies, bringing suggestions of my own into the discussion as appropriate.

C. Kerry Purmensky and Pavel Zemliansky, University of Central Florida

Cedar Key Room 223

It's a Matter of Perception: How ESL and First-Language Writers Navigate the Academic Terrain and What Writing Teachers Can Learn From Their Efforts

We will discuss the teaching and learning of academic writing by first-language and ESL writers in the context of the notions of academic discourse and academic literacy. Because both of these groups of writers, regardless of their first language, enter a new discourse community when they enter academia, the challenges of learning academic writing are often similar for both groups. The presentation will include research on ESL and first-language academic writers and offer suggestions to teachers on how to better prepare student writers from all backgrounds to the challenges of functioning in academic environments.

2:00 - 2:50  Panel Discussion

Cape Florida Ballroom 316

From Struggling Writer to Successful Writer: When the “Underprepared” Writer is Engaged

Shannon Carter, Texas A&M University-Commerce; Rebecca Block, Daytona State College; Adele Richardson, University of Central Florida

Students who feel underprepared for college writing—or have been labeled as such by tests or other outside forces—may seem difficult to engage in college writing courses. In this panel, Shannon Carter, Adele Richardson, and Rebecca Block briefly discuss the various approaches they use in their different institutions—from research universities to a state college—to help engage these students. This discussion will then open to the floor so that everyone can share their questions and strategies regarding “underprepared” writers.
2:50-3:00  Break
Cape Florida Ballroom 316

3:00-3:50  Workshop Session II

A.  Mike Palmquist, Colorado State University
Cape Florida Ballroom 316
Language in Action: Using the Conversation Metaphor to Support Student Participation in Civic, Disciplinary, and Professional Discourse
The Burkean notion that writing can be thought of as a form of conversation has become increasingly central to writing pedagogy over the past two decades. Writing teachers seeking a strong rhetorical grounding for their courses have turned to the conversation metaphor not only because it connects strongly to the experiences students bring to their writing courses, but also because it provides the foundation for a well-structured inquiry into the discourse that emerges from a wide range of civic, professional, and disciplinary communities. In this workshop, participants will be provided with a brief overview of the conversation metaphor and its potential as a framework for engaging students in public discourse, work in small groups to consider how the metaphor might be applied to their own courses, and then participate in a general discussion of the potential uses of the metaphor to help students participate in the discourse they encounter in their personal, public, and professional lives.

B.  Debbie Weaver, Leslie Wolcott, and Matt Bryan, University of Central Florida
Garden Key Room 221
Helping Students Find A Voice: Experiences from Teaching a Writing about Writing Curriculum
This presentation will include three University of Central Florida’s instructors’ perspectives in teaching voice to first year writing students in a Writing about Writing Curriculum. The presentation will first discuss what students think about voice when they enter a Composition class. The next segment of the presentation suggests that teaching voice is a multi-step process where students learn how to join a conversation, which gives them a framework for expressing their values and beliefs in a distinctive way. The third portion of the presentation touches on the importance of students recognizing there are multiple voices in writing, and these voices are relevant to a rhetorical situation. Finally, we wrap up sharing how students leave first year writing and how their perception and understanding of "voice" changes from the beginning of the course.

C.  Stacey Pigg and Blake Scott, University of Central Florida
Cedar Key Room 223
Fostering Rhetoric & Civic Engagement Across a Vertical (High School through Upper-Division) Curriculum
From its inception, the study of rhetoric has been concerned with preparing people to be persuasive and ethical citizens, in part by fostering their engagement with exigent civic concerns. Indeed, classical rhetoricians made this goal the centerpiece of their educational systems. Following this general model, we agree that rhetorically focused civic engagement is most productively fostered through a vertical high school-through-upper division curriculum. In this session, we will invite writing and rhetoric teachers at all levels to discuss their students’ rhetorical and civic engagement experiences and to brainstorm ways to coordinate our curricula in this area. Then, UCF presenters will discuss one way the courses and e-portfolio requirement in their Writing & Rhetoric minor attempt to develop students’ competencies and habits of mind around rhetorical civic engagement.

4:00-5:00  Closing Remarks
Cape Florida Ballroom 316
Elizabeth Wardle, University of Central Florida