

CHAPTER 9.

WAC AND WRITING CENTERS:
FINDING SPACE TO WORK ON
INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY,
EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

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When we began working on our presentation for the IWAC conference, we knew little of one another's individual life stories. One-hour Zoom sessions invariably ran into twice that time as we learned those stories. After submitting our proposal and being invited to the conference, we set aside many evenings to Zoom what was happening as the conference and our lives were impacted by a pandemic, unemployment, fires, floods, hurricanes, BLM marches, #MeToo, and LGBTQ+ and immigration concerns, as well as our own worries. We talked in depth about the *1619 Project* (Hannah-Jones et al., 2021), educational challenges with hybrid classes, mental health issues, and how Harvard treated Cornel West.

We discussed Nikole Hannah-Jones' choice to turn down UNC-Chapel Hill's tenure offer and go to Howard. Was she rejecting making a difference at UNC and instead continuing the HBCU tradition of Howard? We wanted to know the details of how and why she made that decision and what impact it would have on both universities. In fact, we were practicing exactly what we had done in WAC writing centers throughout the process of proposing, sharing, collaborating, revising, questioning, and editing what we would finally present. Because we explored those comparisons, we share a narrative here: WAC writing centers can function as spaces for diversity, inclusion, and equity.

INTRODUCTION

Writing centers have long been sites for discursive diversity, for negotiating among registers, codes, and the value systems they represent. Can writing center culture and WAC theory/practice combine to support diversity and inclusion¹ in cultural and social terms, as well as in disciplinary and generic ones? The issues of racism raised in Asao B. Inoue's (2019a) CCCC Chair's Address, Isabel Wilkerson's (2020) *Caste*, and Ibram X. Kendi's (2019) *How to Be an Antiracist* are complicated by "white fragility" that seems to remove majority academics and academic institutions from responsibility for their own racism (DiAngelo, 2018). Because education in the US grew out of, continues to represent, and preserves white privilege, even/especially in codified discourses, it must be deliberately involved in responding to the inequities it perpetuates. Critical pedagogy, particularly Freirean models, argues that the oppressed must free themselves and their oppressors, but even this liberatory perspective does not relieve education and its proctors of responsibility.

So, how can this be done? Writing centers are increasingly understood as WAC centers because they promote and support diverse disciplinary discourses, work with individuals as well as disciplinary communities by advocating in both directions. As "WACtivist" sites, writing centers could arguably promote diversity, equity, and inclusion for all. In doing so, they facilitate an inclusive awareness based on WAC's student-centered priorities. Could principles of WAC be deployed in post/secondary writing centers as guiding principles for growing DEI beyond disciplinary considerations?

White fragility is a significant obstacle to diversity and inclusion based on the racism that is foundational to American education. This new effort must be handled with trusted, informed, and reliable educators. We must support both individuals and this larger effort. Writing centers can be essential and uniquely suited to both kinds of work because so much good WAC work is already being accomplished through writing centers.

What will it take for all writing centers to develop into diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) centers? Educators and consultants must become learners before they can be anything else. They must be comfortable making mistakes

1 We use the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion and their collective acronym, DEI, throughout this piece. When we say diversity, we mean that we value difference. When we say equity, we are advocating fairness and consistency. When we say inclusion, we mean that this is not about appearances but about full engagement that makes the most of difference by welcoming all on equal terms and footings. For further information on our interpretations of these terms, please visit the "Higher Education Today" blog, where we think you will find an apt clarification and valuable information: <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2021/01/13/refocusing-diversity-equity-inclusion-pandemic-beyond-lessons-community-practice/>.

and learning from them in an environment characterized by a growth mindset (Dweck, 2016) and double-loop problem-solving (Argyris, 1976). They have to take risks, overcome much of their own fragility, and be supported in doing so, like any good WAC-aware writing center would do. But they also have to support focused and collaborative problem-solving, keeping it manageable for all involved. WAC-based writing centers provide a model for this work and an opportunity for low-risk, safe, and nonjudgmental learning. They create options in comparative safety and temper them with responsibility and community. WAC writing centers become microcosms of how these collaborative communities can be started and are scalable from there. In a 2019 discussion of the CCCC Committee for Change and Review's work, Inoue emailed that the committee could be mined for structure and process in accomplishing these ends. We argue that WAC writing centers refine the 'ore' of that mining.

In the narratives below, we share stories of learning and growing through WAC writing centers, impacting work beyond those writing centers. Story and narrative, beyond being basic to human meaning-making, are now more accepted as research methodologies and objects of study and, more importantly, as means of researching, studying, and understanding. Certainly, these practices create opportunities for more diverse ways of knowing and learning, and inclusive means of building research and scholarship, as evident through work like Norma González, Luis C. Moll, and Cathi Amanti's (2005) *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities*, and even earlier through scholarship like *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* by Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule (1997). This chapter will articulate these arguments and responses through our narratives of actual work that has been done and can be done.

FROM A HIGH SCHOOL WAC PROGRAM TO ARTS DIRECTOR: A FORMER WRITING FELLOW SHARES HIS STORY—BRANDALL'S STORY

To be the "other" is rarely a pleasant experience, and this unpleasant truth applies to writing centers, as well. To feel invited to be one's full self is essential to the development of the young mind.

As a Black boy from a working-class family, I was able to attend the private, expensive, and predominantly white all-boys McCallie School in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This opportunity was made possible because of wealthy, white benefactors that my parents worked for, as well as the many long hours labored by my determined parents. My skin color inherently made me into a pariah in such

an environment, but there was another non-physical trait that created distance: I was, and of course remain, gay. In such a deeply religious and largely homogeneous environment, these traits, at times, created great tension and a sense of not belonging.

After completing McCallie's middle school, I entered McCallie's high school, and it was there that I discovered a connection with the arts: singing in all four choruses and eventually performing in the plays and musicals as well. This experience was the spark for my career to come.

In my junior year, what began as an independent study in prose to prepare for college application essays became much more, including an additional independent study in poetry during my senior year. At that time, the Caldwell Writing Center was directed by Dr. Pamela Childers, whom I now call "Pam," and those independent studies were central to finding my authentic voice, shaping the proud Black, gay man that I am today.

At a school that did not provide a cultural connection for a Black boy and certainly lacked any clubs or support groups for gay students, the writing center was the space that welcomed my unique self. An elective on African history that the instructor focused on the American Civil Rights Movement and an all-white production of "Dreamgirls," presented by McCallie in partnership with a local all-girls school, are two examples of McCallie's environment at that time.

In numerous ways, Pam created a welcoming, judgment-free zone in the writing center, in which my unique identity was celebrated instead of diminished. Rather than creating exercises centered on the literary works of individuals with no connection to my identity, Pam's approach of listening to my needs allowed me to co-create exercises with her, often heavily focused on journaling and self-analysis, based on my personal interests. This approach made me feel that I had something to contribute and that my voice, my opinion, mattered. And by utilizing a one-to-one teaching style, peer scrutiny was eliminated, which was necessary at a time when I was exploring personal areas that my peers may not have understood. This is not to suggest that there were no opportunities for peer-to-peer teaching and collaboration but, instead, that such opportunities were selected to ensure that all involved could contribute fully without fear of personal exposure.

Through a guided exploration of my own curiosity, which is Paulo Freire's (2018) approach to teaching, Pam introduced me to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855) and incorporated Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) into my studies. In confronting reflections of myself through works such as these, Pam often encouraged me to reach for "more," to "dig deeper," to continually ask questions for further investigation in order to prevent merely surface writing or surface conclusions. This approach remains with me today.

After McCallie, I pursued studies in the performing arts and eventually focused on arts administration. In my career as an arts administrator, the skills that I learned in the writing center have, most importantly, helped me to become an effective communicator. With my personal mission “to uplift the overlooked through the arts,” my career has centered on community engagement and removing barriers to accessing the arts, primarily for low-income communities of color. I have developed and implemented programs at a number of organizations, currently serving as Connectivity Director for Kenny Leon’s True Colors Theatre Company in Atlanta, Georgia. True Colors focuses on sharing stories of the African diaspora, which has made our productions and programs timelier during this current racial awakening.

Over the past few years, I have found opportunities to become a more outspoken advocate for overlooked communities, and some of these opportunities have involved Pam. We remained connected since my time at McCallie, and we have collaborated on meaningful projects, such as writing letters to push for equity and a safe environment at McCallie for LGBTQ students and faculty. McCallie has a history of not being a space in which its LGBTQ students have been able to learn without harassment and discrimination, and Pam and I felt that our connections with the school could make a difference. Although there is still much work to be done and we continue to advocate with other brave voices, as of this publication, the school has amended its policies to include LGBTQ identities and has formed a club for the LGBTQ students. Progress. I also use the Community Conversations/ True Talks series, a program through True Colors, as a form of advocacy by bringing together leading voices to hopefully inspire tomorrow’s leaders. One such conversation took place in the spring of 2021, through “Art Meets Activism: John Lewis, C.T. Vivian, and The Baptism” (Arts ATL, 2021). This special event honored the legacies of John Lewis, C.T. Vivian, and other contemporary artists for the 56th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, presented in partnership with the Lincoln Center, Emory University, and the MLK Collection at Morehouse College.

In my work as a producer and arts administrator, I realize that I directly apply Pam’s approach in the writing center by listening, co-creating programs with the communities I serve, and creating spaces in which those communities are valued, just as I experienced many years ago. The skills I learned in the writing center have undoubtedly impacted my effectiveness as a communicator, whether pitching proposals to partners and sponsors for new community-serving programs, negotiating contracts with artists, or leading teams for special collaborations. I am constantly communicating through writing, and my years in the writing center with Pam taught me how to communicate in a way that is true to my unique, authentic voice.

AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE CLASSROOM AND WAC-BASED WRITING CENTERS—PAM’S STORY

My work with Brandall began long after I started my teaching career. However, from student teaching in English and biology, I had begun taking risks across disciplines, trying to create safe learning environments and engaging diverse students, faculty, and administrators. In 1966, I started teaching at a public school in New Jersey. At the end of my first day, I knew the students in my last period 9th grade English class were an apathetic mix of low-income, ESL, minority, and repeat students. Unlike my college prep classes, this one met in an old science classroom, so I decided not to stand behind the stationary lab table and instead walked down the rows looking each student in the eyes and asking them how they wanted to meet the requirements of the course. After a few stunned moments, Kenny, an African American senior who needed one more semester of English to graduate, spoke up. “No one ever asked us that question before. I’d like to try my hand at teaching a grammar lesson so I can understand what I failed last time.” Students who had never spoken up or had been given derogatory nicknames took his lead, and we all congratulated Kenny when he successfully completed that semester. This class taught me that something in the system needed to be changed.

A history colleague, who was teaching many of the same students, agreed to team-teach English and history as a double period the following year to the lowest scoring incoming 9th graders from several school districts. Our new principal thought such a program would give him some positive publicity, and we even invited some of the students to pick their textbooks before the school year began. That was my start of rattling cages (Childers, 2017). That pilot expanded to a four-year program, and I followed the initial group to graduation. My colleagues in both departments discovered how to engage students in learning, and realized ALL students show more improvement when someone cares about them!

At night, I taught and counseled Adult Basic Education (ABE) to those who had never graduated high school and ESL classes to new Americans. Some had immigrated from Mexico, South America, Cuba, Caribbean islands, Greece, Vietnam, and even Russia. All came to classes after long hours of work, with the hope of a better life for themselves and their families. We made learning a joy, a social connection, and a dignified commitment by adding celebratory social events with certificates of attendance. Together we learned about a variety of cultures and about one another, from people of various professions, nationalities, and education who were there for the same reason. We all took pride in one another’s successes.

By the mid-1970s the new Red Bank Regional High School for grades 9-12 brought together for the first time students from three diverse school districts. I had completed a graduate degree and became aware of WAC through studies of James Britton (1975) and Nancy Martin (1976), taken a course with colleagues across disciplines at Rutgers, and contemplated how to improve the writing of ALL students. Through a Northeastern University Summer Writing Institute, Lil Brannon introduced me to the idea of a writing center, and I began studying the works of Janet Emig (1971; 1983), Donald Murray (1968; 1984), Peter Elbow (1973), and Mike Rose (1989). I distinctly remember my first NCTE conference in 1981 where Murray talked about moving in front of his desk to finally writing with his students. He gave me permission to do what I had tried years before, to engage all students in learning and responding to the writing of others. That's when I decided to propose a WAC-based writing center as a pilot program involving my cross-disciplinary colleagues.

Teaching American literature one day, I realized I wanted to create a space to accommodate what Whitman called "The Great Equalizer." A writing center could create that opportunity, serving students from diverse socio-economic and multi-ethnic communities, with varying academic preparations with BIPOC, multilingual, and LGBTQ identities. We moved into larger spaces with trained student volunteer reader-responders and faculty participants. Students who would never encounter one another because of tracking were now interacting during free periods in the writing center or coming with their whole class to participate in a cross-disciplinary writing workshop. At the same time, the school also became a state-designated school for the Performing Arts. I was assigned to design a county-wide audition process for students, select those who would attend as creative writing majors the following year, and create the curriculum I would teach. These new students added energy and financial assistance from their school districts that enabled us to expand the writing center with this new program. We could attend one-day conferences, publish literary calendars and magazines, have poetry readings, participate in master classes through the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and allow all students in the school to become part of this "great equalizer."

In 1990, I accepted a new endowed chair position at an independent boys' college preparatory day/boarding school in Chattanooga, Tennessee. NCTE had just published *The High School Writing Center* (Farrell, 1998), and I realized this perfect opportunity to make a difference at another educational institution. I reflected on what I had learned from starting that first WAC-based writing center: creating a safe space for all writers, encouraging writers to take risks with drafts, learning how to really listen in dialogic exchanges, offering challenges to critical thinking skills, being able to laugh at oneself (Sherwood & Childers, 2014),

developing collaborations among various groups across disciplines, and setting the tone of acceptance in a student-centered environment.

Art Young and Toby Fulwiler's (1986) WAC work reinforced student-centered learning; Frank Smith (1998) reminded me of the joy of learning; and Stephen D. Brookfield and Stephen Preskill's (2005) *Discussion as a Way of Teaching* helped me discover how to involve students and faculty in designing a program and participating in special writing activities across the curriculum. I posted an invitation on the writing center door that said, "Welcome to the Writing Center, a low-risk environment where there is a reverence for writing." Brandall saw that sign when he entered McCallie. Little did I know that invitation would open the door for many other disenfranchised students.

My work with science teacher Michael Lowry turned into team teaching a new senior science seminar called *Oceans: Past and Present* in a landlocked state of Tennessee and many WAC projects with other science classes through the writing center (Lowry & Childers, 2016). We expanded to offer independent study courses across disciplines like the ones Brandall took (Baker et al., 2007; Childers & Straka, 2004; Grant et al., 1997) and created a writing fellows program. Students taught computer science courses after school for teachers and students (Davis & Childers, 2006); and presented Diversity Day workshops, such as the one writing fellows led viewing "The Motorcycle Diaries," with questions to begin discussion of the social, cultural, and health issues the young Che Guevara experienced on his journey, then focusing on Guevara's later life and death. Students also published collaborative work (Childers, et al., 1998), offered online grammar lessons, taught poetry to 9th graders (Mooney et al., 2010), and presented at IWAC and CCCC conferences. Besides my own classes, I sometimes taught research and writing units in AP biology, Bible, and AP American history. Students saw me out of the writing center, learning with and from them in other disciplines. One history teacher told his students, "Take your paper to the writing center and talk with Dr. Childers; she hates history and will question anything you haven't explained to her clearly." I even began teaching graduate courses in the teaching of writing, so K-12 teachers could learn how to value WAC in their classes.

These experiences in two very different secondary schools had similarities. Both offered Advanced Placement, specialized, and developmental courses for students from diverse racial, religious, academic, gender orientation, and economic backgrounds; included wealthy students and students on full or partial financial assistance; and included a smorgasbord of international students. Many students were discovering and struggling with their own sexuality and gender identity. Brandall was not alone, and others at both institutions were just as brave to find a safe place in the writing center to discuss those concerns. What

the institutions and administrators allowed through WAC and writing center programs were opportunities for students to engage in the joy of learning, to collaborate with one another, teachers, and even globally with people from other institutions or careers.

I want to return to Kenny, who taught me to engage students by making the class student centered and trusting them to know what they needed to succeed. And, Whitman, whose idea of the great equalizer influenced my idea of a writing center where students at both schools could discover their passions. I learned the dignity of each of us as individuals, worthy of being heard, questioned, respected, and challenged to discover the best that we can be. Yes, writing can be a great equalizer, like a writing center, and Kenny was one of my best teachers.

IS AGENCY ENOUGH? THE POWER AND PERIL OF INDIVIDUALISM IN SYSTEMIC RACISM—BILL'S STORY

I was moved to the Midwest at eight. More than one kid there couldn't play with me because I was Catholic. I wasn't. I was an idol worshiper because that's what they said Catholics did. Wasn't and didn't. One kid called me an "idolater." Neither of us could say what an idolator was, but we both knew what rejection was. There, in America's heartland, my parents didn't notice right away their being shown homes in only Black and Latinx neighborhoods. What stung once they did notice was that choice being made about and for them. I understood then that school had to become a way out.

I tried college in '79 and hated it, as I did most of the jobs I wandered through then. School was not specific or welcoming, but it had to be better than factory work. My blue-collar background meant that no one I knew could really say what college would do. Even so, it beat factory work. Not unlike my folks eventually buying their one and only home, it was a good thing and a lot of money and very poorly understood. I knew what would happen if I didn't go to school. I saw what my folks had; Dad didn't finish ninth grade and Mom couldn't use her full-ride Regent's Scholarship. We had a blunt belief in education and going beyond high school rejected my workaday home culture for something unknown (Finn, 2009). "What are they teaching you over there, anyway" seemed innocuous enough at the time, but it never really was.

In college, I took studio art classes and experienced incredible autonomy and community. More than in my major. This perpetuated continuing extremes for me: status quo/certainty/jobs versus other options/uncertainty/breathing room. My 30+ years in writing centers since provide my greatest sense of professional community because it's all options and uncertainty. Every student who walked through the doors was working on something unique, something that could be

their own. As a director, there was never any end to the possibilities of where my writing centers could go, what they could do, what new options they could explore. There was no shortage of collaborators on writing. It's the writing *with* (Deans, 1998) and the shared experiences (Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2015) that most engaged me.

My studio-focused dissertation propelled my career forward. Since then, agency and self-efficacy via social psychology, brain development, and young adult psychology have amplified my study of writer empowerment. Over the past four years, I've studied Oxford University's tutorial pedagogies, an elite pedagogy to be sure, which safely assume competence and capability. Each student could be exceptional, enhanced through mentoring and challenge (Palfreyman, 2019). These studies have led to mindful writing that emphasizes awareness of the writer, the writing, and the written. This has become a rich context for empowering student writers.

These interests and work resonate with DEI work now, too, because I have to step back from controlling any writing I encounter. I have to be open to perspectives that may not be familiar. And I have to respect that others' ways will not be my own and see the value in their purposes and processes. That said, across these contexts, I find a consistent complication: Neophytes are expected to adapt, to be agents of change in extant classism, racism, ageism, ableism, sexism, even while they are reminded always that 'you are welcome here as long as you assimilate' (Inoue, 2019b); 'you are welcome here, as long as you assimilate' seems to be the message. For example, TAs in writing studies acclimate quickly to conflicting roles and responsibilities. Systemic flaws and challenges are freely acknowledged in the literature, but scholars' solutions are almost always laid at the feet of TAs, not unlike the burden of responding to racism put on our BI-POC brothers and sisters described in Robin DiAngelo's (2018) *White Fragility*. Those empowered by these systems expect victims of those systems' to fix them.

Freire (2018) says the oppressed must free themselves and their oppressors. I understand that oppressors creating new systems, even with the best intentions, sustains the powers that oppress. It just seems like a lot to ask of those already dealing with being oppressed.

Writing centers can be thought of as exceptions here. Stephen M. North (1987) famously wrote that writing centers make better writers. 'Give the writer control' is writing center dogma. Do writing consultants have that power? If so, aren't they then oppressive in caste if not in practice? Are writing centers really to decide who writers should be? Writing center staff are usually trained in what is called "nondirectivity" as a way to respect writer autonomy. Nondirectivity can oppress when done poorly, becoming a weird game of "guess what I'm thinking." Writers then chase right answers because nondirective tutors won't tell them

what those answers are. Choosing “nondirection” is power, as is denying the power in that choice.

The challenge in DEI work, as it is in training writing center staff and working directly with student writers, is to be available not only to the activity but to the differences, the valuations, the appropriateness of unfamiliar or “other” ways of making and expressing meaning. Where curricula can provide articulated paths to identified goals, writing centers and writing tutors cannot because they deal with so many variations, individuals, and disciplines. That work has to be done through inquiry, not decision. It has to be done through context *and* episode, not through reliance on the status quo. While a writing center can be “directive” about its purposes and practices, neither a writing center nor a writing tutor can be effective if they attempt to homogenize their practices or the writers who seek their help.

When Vershawn Young and other scholars use varying registers, dialects, and codings, strong professional community responses follow, many less than positive. Writing teachers and centers work to facilitate academic discourses. Students can think that othered discourses have little or no academic value. What happens when family or neighborhood logics aren’t allowed in school? When students start to sound different at home? Don’t choose academic discourses?

Think about Cornel West and his recent bid for tenure at Harvard. His mind and discourse make him a most recognizable public intellectual. But, when it came to permanent employment at a prestigious institution he had already been serving, something changed. Too much agency? Sounds too Black? Why deny him his earned seat at the high table now?

It seems what made Hannah-Jones attractive to UNC confounded her tenure bid. UNC eventually offered her tenure, grudgingly and under public pressure, but something clearly changed. Is it that people of color can be agentive, just not too agentive? Are diversity, equity, and inclusion marketing concepts rather than real interests? Sheryl I. Fontaine and Susan Hunter (1993) write:

Real changes in the way the story is unfolding, then, will not come from our simply being included or alluded to in the current narratives. To become heard does not mean to become part of the center or to move away from the borders [...] the voices gathered together here may not be raised again next year [...] And then again some may be. As we write ourselves into the story [...] our unheard voices will not necessarily become tomorrow’s heard voices. There’s no guarantee. (p. 15)

So, how might WAC writing centers, with such promise, move the needle on confounding systemic racism in higher education? Larry Ward (2020) tells us that this work will take “deeper education, skillful introspection, and wise

cultivating of the seeds of compassion for self and all relations” over a “bridge of mercy” (p. 89, p. 95). Doing this work includes self-compassion and post-traumatic growth, deploying “help now” strategies, reflecting on our own humanness, cultivating resources for resilience, making room for the work, and learning to hold suffering with clarity and grace (Ward, 2020). There are more specific tools available to us, too.

Coming to these discussions, we can:

- Choose deliberately among Kendi’s (2018) options: separatist, assimilationist, or antiracist;
- Use Freire’s (2018) ideas of every person having their own word and respecting those words;
- Use Thich Nhat Hanh’s (2017) ideas of listening lovingly and speaking compassionately.

Participating in these efforts, we can:

- Remember West’s (2021) acknowledgment: “Do you have a fingerprint? Then you have a voice!” Use it;
- Use DiAngelo’s (2018) “reasonable roles and reasonable expectations”;
- Use Carol S. Dweck’s (2016) “growth mindset” to make room for productive mistakes;
- Ground our teaching/tutoring in González, Moll, and Amanti’s (2005) “funds of knowledge”;
- Use Ronald A. Heifetz’s (2009) differentiation between “technical problem-solving” (here’s a problem, here’s a solution) and “adaptive change” (broader work and unfamiliar responses).

To grow from these experiences, we can:

- Avoid what Amy Lombardi (2021) calls our habit of “hyper-macro-izing” difficult topics, forgetting that people are directly impacted by our work or lack of it;
- Assume the Oxford tutorial premise that everyone is more than competent and possibly exceptional (Palfreyman, 2019);
- Use Chris Argyris’ (1976) double-loop problem-solving to ask why *toward* finding solutions;
- Remember Alina Tugend’s (2012) revealing our discomfort with error: we have to get comfortable with making mistakes and being wrong sometimes.

WAC-based writing centers are especially well positioned for this important work (Waldo, 2004). We do work like this every day with student writers

making their ways into diverse disciplinary ways of knowing and communicating. Acknowledge that power; use that privilege! Extend quality WAC writing center work by carefully developing practices for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Prepare centers for this work. West, DiAngelo, Freire, Ward, Hanh, Dweck and so many others will help. Will we let them?

OUR REFLECTIONS

Each of us changed what we had originally intended to write because of a question, idea, or experience with the other two. All three of us had worked hard at a variety of jobs to pay for our own educations with support from scholarships, grants, and loans, so we had a connection to the socio-economic concerns of others as well as discriminatory experiences tied to race, gender, sexuality, class, and educational backgrounds. It has been exhilarating as we have gone from three unique individuals with totally different backgrounds to discovering commonalities, changing some of our own ideas, taking risks, accepting new perspectives from what we had read or observed, challenging one another to “dig deeper,” and supporting one another’s efforts. In real time, we practiced the theme of this conference by “Celebrating Successes, Recognizing Challenges, Inviting Critiques and Innovations.”

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