



Just Write!



Quarterly Newsletter of the University Writing Center at UCF

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A Note From Our Editors:

We welcome you to our inaugural edition of *Just Write!*, a newsletter sponsored and organized by the University Writing Center! This special first edition was created and edited by Brittany Herrmann, Mekenzie McElroy, Jeanette Simanek, and Jarrett Webster. We wanted to thank our peer-tutors and the Director of the Writing Center Professor Weaver for all of their support! Our purpose is to create a sustainable dialogue about writing for all students at UCF. Thank you for being a part of our community at the UWC. We strongly believe that everyone has the aptitude to write! This newsletter supports writers and students in our community at UCF and eagerly promotes writing-related events. We are grateful for the opportunity and the ability to create, write, read and dream.



DIRECTORS WRITE

BY PROFESSOR DEBORAH WEAVER: THE DIRECTOR OF THE UWC

Recently, I joined an online writer's group, which reminded me of the importance of writers belonging to a community. Writing is a solo activity and can often be isolating. Some days it is hard to sit at a computer and compose and revise. Cleaning out your closet or reorganizing your t-shirt drawers seems a better alternative than staring at a blank screen waiting for one sentence to emerge.

Over the years, I have belonged to several communities of writers. One where we met in the home of an accomplished writer, who guided the group and rendered advice. Another where writers gathered and wrote in the same space, at the same table, and offered feedback to each other's drafts.

What these groups provide for writers is first accountability. Writers need a reason to show up, to be consistent in order to finish any piece of writing. We need accountability to accomplish other things we do in life. We show up for work because we are scheduled, because someone depends on us. Many of us need an exercise buddy to get off the couch and head to the gym. Writing doesn't happen without deadlines or accountability. Belonging to a community of writers helps you prioritize writing in your life and ensures the work will get done.

Yet, the single most reason to belong to a writing community is to receive feedback. Writers need to hear how their story, poem, essay, or dissertation is being perceived. Where are the gaps? What additional information needs to be included to develop a character or idea more completely? What main points are misunderstood? It is difficult for writers to sit back from our work, to review our work objectively. Receiving feedback consistently helps a writer grow, aids them in polishing the craft. As well, giving feedback to others improves your own writing. We improve metacognitively as writers when we read and offer feedback to others.

My online group is a bit more formal than ones I have previously joined. There are prompts and deadlines and requirements in giving feedback. Which kind of writer's group you decide to join is not as important as making a commitment to your writing, to your passion. Know that UWC continues to be a place to support your writing endeavors. We are a community of writers whose job is to support your writing. Joining a community of writers has motivated me and encouraged me. It reinforces and reminds me that writing is hard enough and sharing a space with like-minded individuals makes the drafting or revising a little bit easier.



WRITERS WRITE

By Olivia Browdy

Olivia has recently graduated from UCF, but looks back fondly on her time at the UWC.

As a music major, I have passed by the University Writing Center's physical location almost every day on my way from the music building to the rehearsal hall. I walked by, staring at students working, but never once walked inside. In four years at UCF, I rarely felt the need to seek guidance from the University Writing Center. I only had to write a few papers per year and was able to complete the assignments on my own or seek the help of my teachers. The service was always in the back of my mind, but if I ever considered going in. I either thought, "I don't have enough done to work with" or, "My paper already meets the requirements, so I don't need anyone else to look at it."



Not until my final semester at UCF did I utilize the services of the University Writing Center. I was preparing my statement of purpose to apply for graduate school programs and found myself stuck with ideas and no words. I had things I wanted to say and express, but was having trouble putting them on paper or articulating correctly. I was down to the wire and my application was due in a matter of days. As a last ditch effort to have the best application possible, I sought out help from the writing center. One great thing about this the UWC is that I was able to sign up for a time to meet virtually with a consultant. For someone who was nervous about the experience, that definitely made it more accessible, as I was able to sign up directly on the portal and not even leave my room to have the consultation.

I knew I was not looking for someone to write for me or just correct my grammar, but I needed some help putting those thoughts onto the page. I needed aid to ensure proper use of literary devices and structure. It was made clear at the beginning of the appointment that this is exactly the service they provide. I worked with Jarrett, who coincidentally is also a musician. He was able to help me funnel my scattered thoughts into a focused structure which eventually became a paper. We strategized on ways to face writer's block, how to find the best organization for a paper, and how to make useful revisions once the paper is written. I was able to use our conversations and tools to write my own paper but with better direction and confidence.



The University Writing Center is an incredibly helpful resource that I wish I had taken advantage of sooner in my collegiate career. This is not only for academic papers, essays, and assignments, but also for personal projects. Had I not sought the aid of the Writing Center I would have completed my paper, but would not feel as confident or pleased with my own work. I would largely encourage other students to venture outside of their bubble and utilize this resource on any writing project they may be working on. When I finally had a personal writing project that meant a lot to me, it was very reassuring to collaborate with someone who could guide my own writing into what I had envisioned.

TUTORS WRITE

What are our consultants working on outside of the UWC? Priscila tells us about her struggle to start writing and how she resolves her dilemma.

Woes of First Sentences by Priscila Schilaro

It was a dark, stormy night when I sat down to write the first sentence of my short story and realized there is nothing original under the sun. Yet, I kept going. I kept striving for that one sentence that encompasses meaning and emotion in a way that feels personal and unique but understandable to anyone. As I struggled to introduce my characters, plot, and setting in a single sentence for an assignment, I had to decide between sensation, information, and innovation. Should I go for a word that sounds good or use the one that is clear and unambiguous?

But the challenge of a first sentence goes beyond the confines of structure and word choice. The start of a story needs to make a splash, hook the reader in. It's like a job interview you don't get a second chance at a good first impression. Somehow you convinced the reader, either with your title, summary, or cover, that you have something to say that they will like. Now, it's time to prove it. But how? Common advice says to start with action, make the reader curious, start where the story really starts. The last one seems a bit crazy. Doesn't the story start the moment I decide it's going to start? Well, that's a mirage, a lie we tell ourselves because the stories in our heads already began a long time ago, sometimes years ago. So, instead, we sometimes force the reader to catch up with us, and that's when first sentences and paragraphs can fail.

PEER-TUTOR AT THE UWC

Priscila has been with
the UWC for 8 months!

While writers chip away, word by word, to sculpt the perfect start, the reader is waving behind them, trying to point out they have broken the nose of the sphinx, and now the whole thing makes no sense. So, what does all of this means in the end? What sage advice hides in these paragraphs? Well, wise people know they know nothing (Jon Snow). Keep it simple, keep it clear, and forget about it for a week. Then go back and revise it again. If nothing is original and everything has been said, you might as well relax and help the reader out. Be nice, ease them into your world and don't forget they don't want the vacation photos and a summary—they want the full tour.

So, beginnings are hard. But you know what's harder? Endings.



STEPS 2 SUCCESS

PHILOSOPHY

Writing philosophy papers can be difficult, especially because students have little to no previous experience with this genre of writing. The best tips to keep in mind would be to begin your paper with a strong, clear thesis or main argument. Philosophy is all about being precise and focused in your ideas, so use your thesis statement to guide your writing. Also, include some counterpoints to your arguments, as this will help you appear unbiased and reasonable in your view. Give credit to opposing sides when applicable, but always make sure to connect back with your thesis statement.

-DERWIN SANCHEZ

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Political science assignments tend to feel as if you are debating or trying to be a part of a conversation. It helps to act as if you are contributing to an ongoing conversation instead of writing a paper. This forces the writer to be clear with their points. This also enforces the idea that the writer needs to persuade the reader into agreeing with them. A huge tip that I always try to remember is to stay on task. It is easy to get off-topic or dive too deep into a particular subject. Something crucial in all majors is the ability to ask for help. Often students feel that they should not ask their professor questions or seek out help. There are so many resources all over campus that are more than willing to help the student. All they have to do is ask.

-ARIELLE FEDEE

BIOMED SCIENCE

With its bounds of rules and components, scientific writing- whether for a chemistry lab report or for your thesis- can be daunting. My biggest tip is to outline. Creating an outline will allow you to get your thoughts and ideas on paper.

WRITING A LAB REPORT OR A LITERATURE REVIEW IS JUST LIKE WRITING A STORY

It sounds funny but writing a lab report or a literature review is just like writing a story: there's a beginning, a middle, and an end. Breaking down how you want your story to flow- from establishing the importance of your research to concluding what you found- creates a map for you to follow as you begin to actually write.

-RADHIKA DESAI

COMMON PROJECTS

WHAT HAVE WE SEEN IN THE UWC?



LITERACY NARRATIVE

BY MEKENZIE MCELROY

A literacy narrative is one of the most common assignments seen at the UWC. The goal of this assignment is to share how a writer has developed their reading and writing skills. Literacy narratives are specifically used to tell how their experiences shaped their reading and writing. They also allow the writer to have a better understanding of their relationship with reading and writing. No two people share the exact life experiences, even when it comes to writing, so there is no one topic that is the “right” one to talk about in a literacy narrative. Some examples of what you could write about are an early memory about reading or writing that you recall vividly, someone who taught you to read or write, the origins of your current attitudes about reading or writing, a book or text that has impacted you in some way, and so much more. The options are almost endless when it comes to the topic of a literacy narrative because everyone’s experiences with reading and writing are so different. As long as you’re writing about your experiences in reading or writing and how they affected your future in that regard, you’re on the right track!

Now that you have an idea of what the assignment could be about, let’s get into how to write a literacy narrative. First, you’re going to want to think of a time your experiences with reading and writing were impacted, so think of one of those moments mentioned above. When describing this experience, be sure to use descriptive detail to explain the setting: where you were, who you were with, what you were doing. After you’ve described the event, now comes the important part: explaining how the experience changed you as a reader or a writer (or both!). Explain where the experience led you in your reading and writing journey and any challenges you faced in the process. Schedule an appointment at the Writing Center before the submission deadline to get some help with your writing. Now, this isn’t a requirement, but it can be extremely helpful in your situation!

While you’re writing, keep your purpose and your audience in mind. Why is this the story you want to tell? It should be apparent why this experience is one you selected, it should have had a noticeable impact on your reading and writing journey. Is your audience likely to have had a similar experience to yours? If not, how much will you have to explain in order for them to understand your experience? An audience of your professor or instructor may have a better understanding of writing assignments that could have impacted you, but your peers may not have had assignments similar to your own and would require more of an explanation.

At the end of the day, a literacy narrative is your story. It should be an accurate reflection of your experiences with reading and writing.

INQUIRY SPOTLIGHT

VILMA PORTOCARRERO



As a Latinx writer, I have often felt overwhelmed by the predominantly white space that is the English department. In my workshops, my peers have unknowingly made suggestions that would force my writing to conform to a white-centric perspective. For example, as a bilingual writer of English and Spanish, I have been told by my professors to translate Spanish text, essentially appealing to white audiences' palates.

I believe many POC writers have felt this unintentional policing of writing in predominantly white institutions like UCF. The majority of writing workshop professors in these universities are overwhelmingly white, leaving POC writers without someone to shape their writing in a way that is relatable to their lived experience. Furthermore, most publishers are white as well, leaving little room for POC writers to authentically represent themselves on the page compared to their white counterparts. Learning this drew me to research race in the writing center and our office's role in shaping writers of color. I wanted to know if tutors unknowingly stifle writers of color because of the white-centric writing practices set in place.

My group and I are interested in researching how we can improve writing center practices and systems to benefit POC tutors and writers. Our goals are to understand what support exists for scholars of color at the University of Central Florida to understand how to improve upon what is available for students. We hope that by researching POC-centered writing centers' practices, such as writing centers within Historically Black Colleges, we can better understand how to address gaps in our writing center and start to provide them at our university. This inquiry topic was not the first we landed on; at first, we were concerned with anti-racist practices in the writing center and increasing representation of scholars of color in the writing center curriculum and practices for training. We switched trajectories because we were interested in seeing how far inquiry projects themselves can be a jumping-off point for tutors that transition to scholarship in the writing center. We feel that conducting this research is the first step to creating a long-lasting writing center community that does more than just help writers but also shapes scholars and produces innovative research for the writing center field.



**"If there is no struggle,
there is no progress."
~ Frederick Douglass**



Just Write!



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SCHEDULE AN
APPOINTMENT WITH
ONE OF OUR
AWESOME PEER
TUTORS!



RESOURCES AND EVENTS

Publication Opportunities:

Convergence Rhetoric: convergence-rhetoric.net

- Submissions for the Fall issue due August 15th, 2021

Cypress Dome: cypressdome.org

- Early Bird submissions (including feedback from editors) begin October 1st-31st 2021, open submissions begin November 1st-December 31st

Stylus: writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/stylus/

- Currently accepting submissions for the 2021 issue, check with your ENC 1101 or 1102 professor.

Imprint: writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/imprint

- Submissions open Summer 2021; keep an eye out for updates!

Florida Review: floridareview.cah.ucf.edu/

- Open submissions all year!

Tutor's Choice Flash Fiction Contest:
<https://forms.gle/HA2LEPkNhSR3GVeH9>

- Submissions are due June 4th, 2021.

Future Events (Look out for dates on social media!):

Cypress Dome:

- Monthly Open Mics @cypressdome

UWC:

- Grammar Workshop April 7th 6 PM-7:30 PM:
<http://bit.ly/UWCGrammarWorkshop>
- WriteWithMeWednesdays 6PM-7PM:
<http://bit.ly/UCFWWMW>

Resources and Links:

- UWC Instagram: @ucfuwc
- UWC Resources: <https://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/find-resources/>
- Purdue OWL Citation and Formatting:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html