

When Imagination and Metaphor Soar: Poets as Writing Center Directors

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We, Julie Moore and Shanna Powlus Wheeler, as published poets and writing center directors, propose a presentation in which we explore how we became “mindful of the relationship between creative work and academic work” (Bouquet and Eodice 4). Using the relationship between Dayton neighbors Paul Laurence Dunbar and the Wright brothers as inspiration, we will draw upon Wendell Berry’s argument that science and art are not “inherently at odds with one another . . . [for] ‘science’ means knowing and ‘art’ means doing . . . Out of school, the two are commonly inter-involved and naturally cooperative [even] in the same person—a farmer, say, or a woodworker, who knows and does both at the same time” (124). As poets and administrators, we both *know* and *do*, so we will discuss how we’ve applied the seven principles in Bouquet and Eodice’s framework for “[c]reativity and [i]mprovisation” to devise imaginative approaches to our own writing center work. In particular, we’ll explore how we disrupt “habit patterns,” construct standard practices that allow for “maximum flexibility,” and foster community and discourse, all while assessing competence and encouraging risk-taking (8). Inspired by Wendy Bishop’s unique tutoring techniques and Severino and Mosher’s “[i]nvitation and dialogue-based,” workshop-like writing center, we will explore how we integrate disparate fields of knowledge to train our tutors and develop our centers in imaginative ways. To prompt discussion among participants, we will share a couple of our poems about this vital work in liberal arts education and solicit other creative ideas.

250 Words

Works Cited

- Berry, Wendell. *Life is a Miracle: An Essay Against Modern Superstition*. Counterpoint, 2000.
- Bishop, Wendy. “Is There a Creative Writer in the House? Tutoring to Enhance Creativity and Engagement.” *A Tutor’s Guide: Helping Writers One-to-One*, 2nd ed., edited by Ben Rafoth, Heinemann, 2005, pp. 74-84.
- Bouquet, Elizabeth and Michele Eodice. “Creativity in the Writing Center: A Terrifying Conundrum.” *Creative Approaches to Writing Center Work*, edited by Kevin Dvorak and Shanti Bruce, Hampton Press, 2008.
- Severino, Carol and Cinda Coggins Mosher. “Invitations and Voices: Fostering Creative Expression.” *Creative Approaches to Writing Center Work*, edited by Kevin Dvorak and Shanti Bruce, Hampton Press, 2008.

