

Title: Listening Across Experience: A Cultural Rhetorics Approach to Understanding Power Dynamics and Relationality within a University Writing Center

Keyword Set: power dynamics, institutional ethnography, cultural rhetorics, visibility/invisibility of labor, visibility/invisibility of emotional labor, personal narratives

Abstract:

Our project looks to the lived experiences of consultants, the assistant director, and director of our own University Writing Center (UWC) to conduct an institutional ethnography of our internal power structures and their impact on the everyday practices within the UWC. The stories of individuals within our community will provide us with a clearer understanding of the dynamics of our writing center, which can be valuable for other writing center communities to consider. A few central questions that panelists will discuss include: 1) How can we make visible the productive nature of power?, 2) How do we work with and against institutional constraints to produce/create meaningful change?, and 3) How can the practice of studying the power within institutions/organizations that we are a part of, shift or add to our conceptualization of Writing Center work?

In our project, we recognize that we come to the UWC with different orientations to the work, which impacts how we conceptualize and engage in the work of the UWC. In addition, we see our project as one that supports a re-imagining and re-making of administrative structures and practices within the UWC (or, at the very least, making them more visible and relatable. In this presentation, we will emphasize relationality and how it contributes to and disrupts the making of community and WC work.

Method: Panel Presentation with a PowerPoint (tech needed)

Presenter names: Varshini Balaji, Marilee Brooks-Gillies, Kelin Hull, KC Chan Brose, James White

Varshini Balaji
Peer Consultant
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
vabalaji@iu.edu

Marilee Brooks-Gillies
Director of University Writing Center and Assistant Professor of English
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
mbrooksg@iupui.edu

Kelin Hull
Assistant Director of University Writing Center
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
kmclana@indiana.edu

KC Chan-Brose

Adjunct Faculty
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
kc1@iu.edu

James White
Office Coordinator and Peer Consultant
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
whitjame@iu.edu