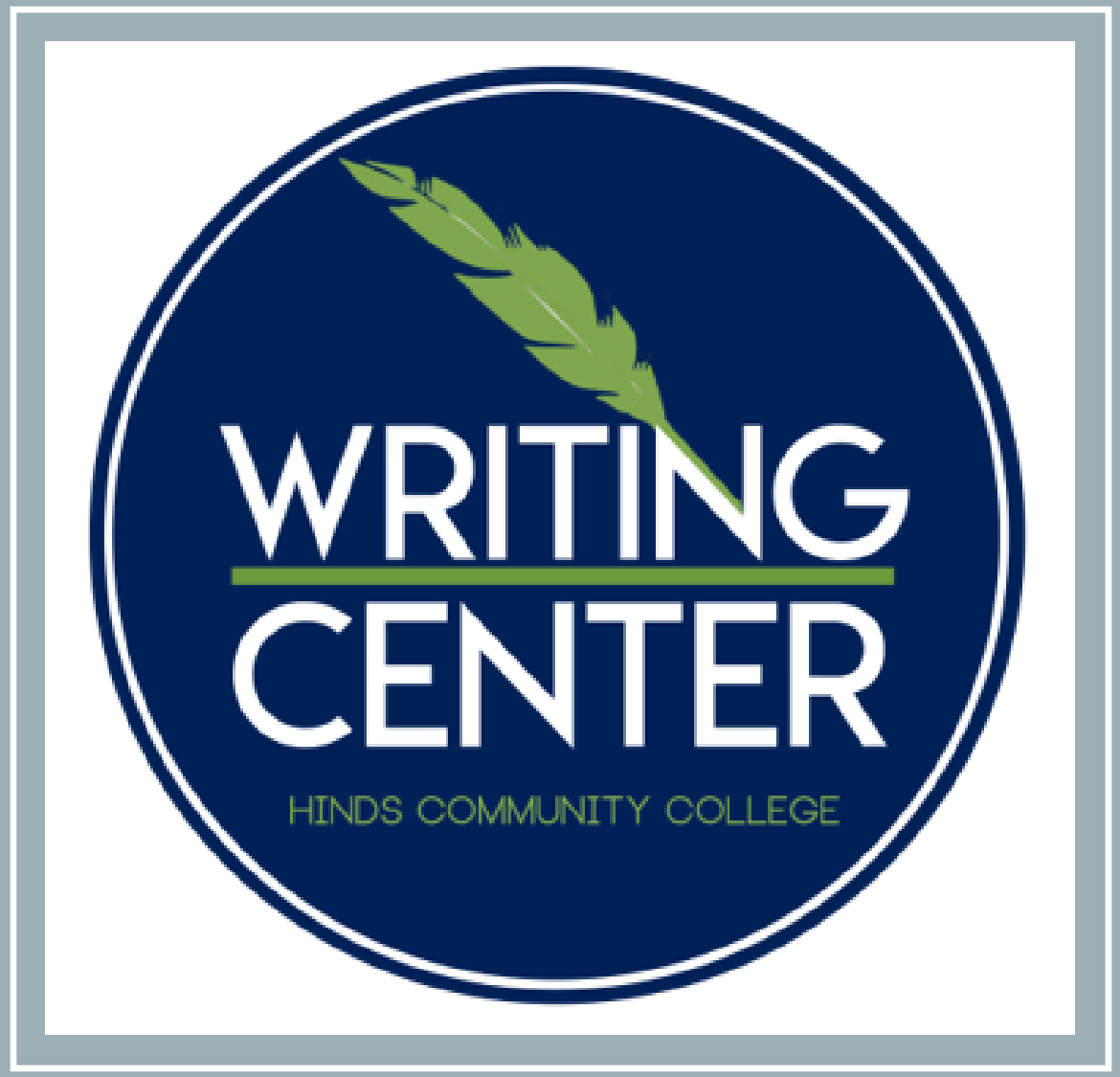


DEVELOPING STAFF THROUGH ENGAGEMENT & SELF-AWARENESS

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THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE WRITING CENTER

OPEN ENROLLMENT

- Due to open enrollment, students at community colleges come from a variety of backgrounds (Murphy et al).
- Often, the typical community college student is less concerned with their academics and more concerned with responsibilities such as a job, family, bills, taxes, etc.
- "One might [conclude] that because anyone can attend a community college despite poor academic performance in the past, the role of [the] writing center will be more more heavily remedial…" (Murphy et al).
- Training tutors to be prepared for each type of student that may come into the center: their past, possible weak foundation in education, history in trauma, lack of support, etc. Class might also visit a beginner English course to gain an understanding of the lowest level English course that is remedial

Murphy, Christina, and Byron L. Stay. *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book*. Routledge, 2006.

"Tutoring is, ideally, more process centered than product-centered. By this I mean that the main goal of any tutoring session is not so much to produce a good single piece of writing as to give the writer the confidence and strategies to keep growing and improving" - Robert Leahy



Leahy, Richard. "What the College Writing Center Is--and Isn't." *College Teaching*, vol. 38, no. 2, Spring 1990, p. 43.

DIRECTIVE VS. NON-DIRECTIVE TUTORING

- The "switch" in tutoring methods began even before the pandemic
- Student writers in survival mode where each "single piece of writing" does count
- Tutors as "first responders" responding to a crisis
- Barriers due to COVID-19 (technology, masks, plexiglass, etc.) created the need for staff to be possibly less professional and more engaging

THE VALUE OF ENGAGEMENT

Engaging our tutors in a relaxed, intimate, yet professional manner teaches them how to engage the writers

Finding ways to connect with our tutors, whether it be via memes, social media, or apps such as Marco Polo or GroupMe

Creative outlets for writing and team building, such as COVID themed writing events, mental health checks with counseling services, etc.



ENGAGING TUTORS = ENGAGED WRITERS

RECURRING SESSIONS

"Regular use of our Writing Center is correlated with higher grades in writing rich courses, regardless of student background. Findings regarding one-time visitors indicate that adopting more flexible pedagogies is key in encouraging them to return" (Trosset et. al.)

The more times students visit the writing center, the more they like it and will benefit from its services (Carino and Enders).

Trosset, Carol, et al. "Learning from Writing Center Assessment: Regular Use Can Mitigate Students' Challenges." *Learning Assistance Review* (TLAR), vol. 24, no. 2, Fall 2019, pp. 29–51.
Carino, P., & Enders, D. "Does frequency of visits to the writing center increase student satisfaction? A statistical correlation study—or story." *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2001, p. 83-103.

THE ART OF COLLABORATION

Using Surveys, Workshops, & Client Report Forms

- Engaged faculty across the curriculum to show support; hosted meetings and workshops; created Canvas modules for WC assistance
- Promoted a more cohesive vision of the purpose of the center with an employee survey
- Follow-up after surveys
- Post-COVID, we collaborated with DSS (Disability Support Services), athletic study halls, student organizations, and career & technical programs
- Now, we have collaborated with counseling services, sociology, public speaking, student recreation, Honors, and more!
- Used client report forms to show fac

LET'S REFLECT ON OUR STAFF

Questions to ask yourselves and discuss:

What is a new way I can engage my tutors/staff?

Who/what areas could my center work to collaborate with?

How have you pivoted/switch methods or how might you need to pivot or change your training methods?

MULTIPLE MODALITIES

LOSS

- Access for students without tech/power
- Absence of F2F contact
- Distance from campus culture
- Feedback too directive
- Uncertainty over reception of feedback

GAIN

- Meet needs of online students
- Accommodate range of schedules
- Ability to serve multiple centers
- Students have record of suggestions
- Feedback saved, could be shared

CENTERING AND SELF-CARE

- "What I'm suggesting is that we take a protective stance toward ourselves, each other, and whatever is left of what makes us human - including the alliances that sustain and surprise us. I'm suggesting that we protect our spaces and our time for non-instrumental, noncommercial activity and thought, for maintenance, for care, for conviviality."
- - Jenny Odell, *How to Do Nothing*

- **Habits come from repetition.**
- **Offer what you want to see in the space.**
- **Welcome every body and every story, including yours**
- **Holistic approach to needs**
- **Recognize the strain**

FOSTERING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

- Model empathetic mutual witness
- Write together through trauma
- Clarify expectations
- "Recognize the kayak is upside down"
- Simplify and streamline processes
- Realism without scarcity

BREAKOUT REFLECTIONS

Let's talk about burnout: how are you doing?

What would you say in a letter to the You of one year ago?

Describe a favorite object in your writing center or home workspace