



Purdue  
Writing  
Lab

# Alumni Annotations

A Newsletter for Alumni and Friends of the Writing Lab at Purdue

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Spring 2017

## Message from the Director

As the calendar flips to April, many of us are welcoming the end of the Spring conference season, and our minds begin to drift toward wrapping up the semester and fantasies of summer activity. I have to confess that my mind these last few days also has begun to wander as I begin to schedule out trips and writing time on a number of projects.

At the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) Collaborative that met prior to the Conference on College Composition (CCCC) Convention in Portland, Oregon, during mid-March, Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison, Elizabeth Geib, Tammy Conard-Salvo and I continued to build awareness of our on-going research that is replicating the Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Project here at Purdue. For this presentation, we used the project's open-ended survey responses to teach other writing center professionals how to use grounded theory generation to analyze and code responses. Tammy spoke to our local context and history, while Talisha and Elizabeth reflected on and modeled how they had approached their own analyses of other question subsets in the survey. I gave a brief lesson on the theory and practice of coding the responses.



Following that presentation at the Collaborative, I presented with Eric Klinger (University of Colorado-Boulder) and Eliana Schoenberg (Duke University) on cross-institutional writing center assessment research that we are conducting at our institutions. Each of our institutions represents interesting institutional contexts for comparison: CU-Boulder is a flagship research 1, Duke is also a research extensive university, yet it brings the complexities of an elite private institution. Purdue, of course, is the land-grant STEM school in the mix. All of us are documenting the impact of our writing centers on students and seeing significant, positive differences in terms of grades, retention, and persistence to graduation. Our hope is to continue to build excitement about the prospect of writing centers collaborating with institutional assessment offices and sharing their insight across institutional types. While each writing center is unique to its institution, much of what we do is comparable, perhaps even measurable in that potential. Moreover, we hope the profile of our universities offers a sort of leadership that spurs others to follow our collaboration.

That evening, after all these serious and provocative research conversations, the annual Purdue Reunion was held at a nice eatery called Paragon. Faculty, alumni, and current students gathered to network, cheer one another with beverages, celebrate news of promotions, and announce job placements. To round out the evening, we wrapped up the year-long commemoration of the Writing Lab's 40th anniversary. I gave a brief talk during which I reminisced about the role the Writing Lab played in my own entry and growth in the profession, particularly with the guidance that my predecessors Muriel "Mickey" Harris and Linda Bergmann provided. I also reminded the audience that we lost Mary Jo Turley, a long time staff assistant in the Writing Lab, to a horrible accident in West Lafayette this past November. Despite this more somber note, the celebration was a wonderful event made all the better because it was made possible with the generous support of English Department Head, Krista Ratcliffe.

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Purdue University • College of Liberal Arts • Department of English

The regular CCCC Convention followed for the rest of the week—it was a blur of conference sessions, meetings, and meals shared with research partners past and present. A winter storm in the Northeast wreaked havoc on many a participant's attendance; for my panel, two of my four co-presenters got stranded by canceled flights. We shared their presentations with the audience, and together the wider collection of talks previewed an edited collection—*Out in the Center: Public Controversies and Private Struggles*—that we anticipate Utah State University Press publishing this fall.

On return to campus, I had a couple days to collect myself, reconnect with my partner and hounds, and get ready to ship off to another conference where I was scheduled to deliver its keynote talk. The Mississippi Writing Centers Association held this spring's meeting at Millsaps College, in Jackson. I had the honor of speaking to them about my work on the politics of identity and the pedagogy of writing center sessions. Toward the end of the keynote, I shared with them how I am working to make that theoretical insight more and more tangible through empirical research, like the institutional assessment work we have developed (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/research/usage>) as well as the Writing Center Research Project data that we are also hosting on the OWL (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/research/wcrpall>). Both before and following my keynote, I had the chance to sit in on sessions led by a great range of undergraduate peer tutors, graduate students, faculty and administrators across Mississippi. The experience once again underscored to me the value of the work, the teaching and learning that's happening all across the country in writing labs, writing centers, writing studies, and hybrid learning commons.

One highlight of the conference was having a chance encounter with a Purdue Writing Lab alumnus who directs the Writing Center at Alcorn State University. Murray Shugars approached me and told me about his own memorable experiences tutoring in Heavilon under Mickey Harris's leadership. He told me about his memories of returning after graduation, after Mickey had retired, and speaking to the next generation of tutors, discovering who and what guided their work. Once again, the experience made me proud to know I'm part of a great tradition of tutors, staff and faculty, making a difference for writers on campus here in West Lafayette, and also taking those lessons and insight on the road to spaces and generations of writers far beyond Purdue and the Writing Lab. It's that experience that rejuvenates a person's spirit, almost as much as the prospect of Spring and Summer beyond.

Harry Denny  
Director, Writing Lab  
Associate Professor, Purdue English

## Alumni Profiles

### Amberly Simpson, UTA (2014)

My time at the Purdue Writing Lab had a profound impact on me as a person. Indeed, it is one of many things that inspired me to change my career path from one where I was set to go into social psychology research on stereotyping and prejudice to one where I am now in my second year as an English teacher. It is precisely these past two years in teaching that have continually brought my thoughts back to the Purdue Writing Lab, more specifically the OWL, and the profound impact it has outside of the university setting.



extremely motivated, highly proficient, and had been privileged with an educational and family upbringing to support their academic growth. I have no doubt that every one of my students from last year has an incredible career and future ahead of her, and it was beautiful to be a part of that. However, after that year, I decided that the best thing for me was to transition into teaching in the public school system so I could work with a less privileged community of students, especially those of lower socioeconomic status (SES), as well as of greater racial and ethnic diversity. I had grown up in Los Angeles, California in a very poor and exceptionally diverse community and my desire had always been to give back to the community I came from.

I ended up teaching 8th grade English for the lowest performing middle school in the state of Kentucky. Not surprisingly, the difference in academic performance, mannerisms, motivation, family support, and expectations of

these students was night and day. Most of my current set of students perform at an academic level that is several years below what they are supposed to be performing at. They are highly intelligent and highly intuitive, but they are not intelligent in the same, stereotypical ways that my students were at the private school; their upbringing and educational background had not nurtured that same sort of intelligence, but it had certainly given them other, equally valuable, equally beautiful gifts at their disposal. At the end of the day, though, my job is to try and make their abilities more similar to those of my former students. That is the reality of what our testing culture emphasizes. My kids will never be measured by the school system in the ways that they are highly skilled and capable; we just have to make them fit the mold as much as we can to raise test scores and keep the school open.

So how does the OWL fit into all of this? When I was teaching at the private school, I often relied on the OWL to help my students with anything from formatting to grammar rules. We used it as a reference, I borrowed examples from there for classroom warmups, and I generally taught them how to use it to be more self-sufficient in finding answers to the questions they had about writing. From what I have heard from students and teachers alike, this is a common practice! The influence of the OWL in the classroom is absolutely incredible and reaches far wider than what we ever anticipated. However, in noticing this, I cannot help but also notice where we have not been able to reach people. When I realized fairly recently that I had stopped using the OWL in my classroom instruction and stopped recommending it as a resource to my students, I was upset by this. It put me on a mission to figure out why, and the thing that kept popping up was the accessibility of the content to my community of students.

I would not say that I have had an entirely normal experience as a teacher in my first few years having experienced the complete opposite ends of the spectrum in succession, but it has brought to my attention many of the disparities that impact people of lower SES. I will always have an undying love for the Purdue OWL; no one can deny that it is an incredible and ground-breaking tool that is available to people. But it is certainly targeted toward a particular audience: those who are already educated and somewhat proficient at writing and reading. I am not saying that the OWL or Purdue University bear the responsibility of making all things accessible to people of all backgrounds and origins, but I find myself continually circling around the question of what our role is in that process, the process of equity. I ask myself this same question as a teacher and as a hu-

man being as well. It is complicated and murky to say the least. Maybe it's not our role at all, maybe our role is small, maybe we want to embark on an entirely new mission to have no one left out or left behind. At the end of the day, I think it most important that we think about our role as people connected to an educational resource and decide for ourselves how we plan to move forward knowing the power we have.

### Dana Lynn Driscoll, OWL Coordinator, Technical Coordinator (2006-2008)

Last April, I had the delightful opportunity to visit writing centers throughout Oman and give a keynote address at the Middle East North Africa Writing Center Alliance (MENAWCA) conference. The MENAWCA conference was a joint conference being held in conjunction with the International English Language Teaching Conference in Muscat, Oman. Given this dual audience, my keynote address introduced the audience to learning transfer and explored the role and potential collaborations of English language teachers and writing centers in facilitating long-term writing development and learning transfer. I shared data from my longitudinal study through the presentation of the writing experiences of two students and demonstrated how these students' struggles and successes offer us a variety of strategies for tutoring and teaching with transfer in mind. An article based on my presentation\* was recently published in *TESOL Arabia Perspectives* (Volume 24, No. 3, November 2016).



Dana with Peer Tutors at the University of Nizwa Writing Center.

What I discovered at the conference, and in my visits to various writing centers in Oman, is that writing centers—while practically unknown in the region a decade ago—



sprouting up everywhere! I was able to consult with several writing centers in the region and was amazed by the good work these writing centers were doing. With this tremendous growth, however, practitioners are finding that they must re-examine and adapt basic assumptions about the work and practices of writing centers for cultural appropriateness and effectiveness. The MENAWCA conference brought together writing center directors, peer tutors, and professional tutors to explore these and other issues. And

yet, what amazes me is despite widely different cultures the act of tutoring stays the same. Each writing center I visited was full of students working with tutors, smiling, writing, collaborating, and learning together. It is truly the power of collaboration that transcends cultural boundaries and offers so much promise, both here in the US and globally.

*\*Copies of the presentation and article can be obtained by contacting the author at [dana.driscoll@iup.edu](mailto:dana.driscoll@iup.edu).*

## New Faces around the Lab



First row: Ara Adaramola, UTA; Taylor Barnett, UTA; Kayla Beland, BWC; Sydney Doaln, UTA; Julia Donnelly, UTA; Anisha Dutta, BWC.  
 Second row: Adlina Fauzi, UTA; Gail Fukumoto, UTA; Rebekah Jones, BWC; Skye Li, UTA; Nathan McBurnett, UTA; Danny Miller, BWC.  
 Third row: Mina Mohsenian, UTA; Lindsey MacDonald, GTA; Hetal Rathore, UTA; Sarah Riddle, BWC; Claire Shelby, UTA; Henry Shi, UTA.  
 Fourth row: Megan Smith, BWC; David Spicer, BWC; Austin Steinman, UTA; Evan Swasey, BWC; Haley Tow, BWC.



## The Writing Lab's New Logo

You may have noticed up top our newly redesigned logo. Last semester, we partnered with students in the English Department's "Computer Aided Publishing" course as they explored concepts like design process, the relationship between logotypes/icons and identity, and making iterative changes based on constructive criticism. You can learn more about the project and see some of the other candidate designs at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/writinglab/logo>.

## Tutor Spotlight

**Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison, GTA/Data Analytics Coordinator**



This past fall I took on the newly-created position of Writing Lab Usage Analytics Coordinator. The position is part of our effort to use data collected both by the university and by the Writing Lab, primarily via our scheduling system, to improve our work. My role includes looking for patterns that would help us identify opportunities for outreach and research.

My current project is investigating our clients' understanding of terms used for different stages of the writing process. When students make an appointment with a tutor, we ask them to identify one of seven stages—"getting started," "planning," "drafting," "revising," "editing," "understanding instructor comments," or "figuring out what to do next"—as well as which specific tasks they would like to work on during the session. Thus far, I have been analyzing these records and tutors' post-session reports to determine both what clients expect and what a session ultimately focuses on when they use each of these terms. I also plan to conduct tutoring observations to augment my analysis.

The project focuses on students in the Introductory Composition at Purdue (ICaP) course with an eye towards helping ICaP instructors understand what we do at the Writing Lab with their students. In the next stage I hope to conduct group interviews with some of the instructors to understand how they they talk about writing with their students. The overall goal is to strengthen our relationship with ICaP in addition to enhancing our work with with students.

## ESL Corner

**Vicki Kennell, ESL Coordinator**

For the last couple of years, the Writing Lab has been able to hire an ESL Outreach Coordinator with some of our PLaCE funding (Purdue Language and Culture Exchange). I want to use this space to highlight the excellent work that has been done by the people who have served in this position.

### Faculty Guide



**Faculty & Instructor Guide for Working with ESL Student Writers**



**Purdue Writing Lab**

Tyler Carter (Spring semester 2016) was given the task of writing a guide for faculty who work with L2 writers in their classes. This project had been under consideration for a while, and various other graduate students had provided some input. Patrick Love (a summer ESL tutor, 2015) wrote out a page or so of ideas, and Ashely Velazquez (Fall semester 2015) conducted a faculty survey to find out what faculty actually experienced. Tyler took those beginnings, spent many hours researching and writing, and completed the material that turned into our 36-page *Faculty & Instructor Guide for Working with ESL Student Writers* (layout by Anthony Sutton, Summer 2016). The document pro-

vides background information and current research on L2 writers and their writing, rules-of-thumb and tips for working with this population, and a feedback flowchart that instructors can use to guide the feedback they offer L2 writers in their classes. Our hope is that the booklet will help faculty members have realistic expectations for L2 writers and will enable them to better instruct this population—and, of course, that the improved instruction spills over to the Writing Lab in the form of fewer "My professor sent me to the Writing Lab so that you can fix ALL my grammar errors" comments. Interested in seeing the final result? There is a PDF version available on the website: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/writinglab/facultyguide>.

### Multi-Day Workshops & Fun Events



Michelle Campbell (Fall semester 2016 & Spring semester 2017) has spent the majority of her time as ESL Outreach Coordinator developing and delivering intensive, multi-day workshops to various international populations on campus. For undergraduates, she offers Spectacular Sentences & Purposeful Paragraphs. She presented a variation of the workshop to first-year 106 TAs, giving them the opportunity to learn methods for teaching this sort of material in their courses. For graduate students, she offers two workshops: Introduction to Scholarly Writing, and Advanced Scholarly Writing. The graduate workshops, in particular, have been a big hit; available spots tend to fill up within hours of the initial announcement. Numbers, of course, do not tell the whole story, so here are a few comments from actual attendees:

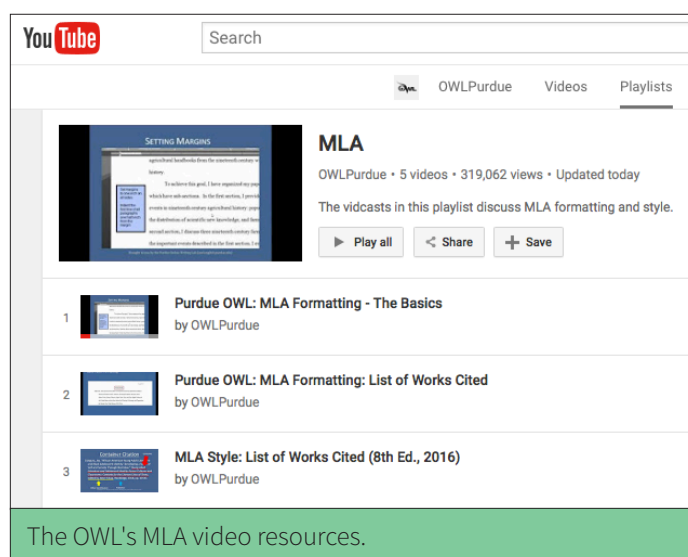
- How can we continue having interactions with you? You were awesome!
- I loved everything to be honest. I think the [workshops] should be mandatory rather than optional.
- This workshop was very encouraging. I think Michelle did a wonderful job covering everything adequately.

In addition to the general workshops, later this spring Michelle will offer undergraduate workshops in collaboration with the Purdue Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center, and she will present a requested workshop for the Colombian Student Association.

Michelle's time in the ESL Outreach Coordinator position has not been all WORK(shop) and no play. Between delivering various workshops, she also coordinated our International Writing Centers Week Language Scripts and Cursive Crafts event. Attendees to the cursive workshop portion of the event got to make Valentines and cursive name pictures, while everyone who passed by got to try their hand at Arabic, Old Norse, Old English, Chinese, and American English cursive. As the Vikings might have said: ÞR|↑T| ǫ†!

### OWL News

Since the Purdue OWL launched a YouTube channel in 2011, videos have become a fixture of content development. OWL videos have covered topics such as rhetoric, invention, citation, and professional and academic genres. As time has passed, we have developed our approach to video content and production with new recording equipment, more sophisticated visual strategies, more robust staff training, and increased attention to accessibility for disabled users. The OWL's YouTube channel now boasts over 12,000 subscribers, and its videos have seen a total of 2.3 million views (and counting!). Our most recently published videos are a three-part series on MLA Style, 8th Edition, covering works cited lists, in-text citations, and major changes from 7th Edition. Be on the lookout for our next videos, which will cover typography basics, revision & editing, and thesis statements, as well as a new series on grammar. For almost two years, these and other projects



have been supported by our Video Content Mentor, Dan Liddle, whose work with developers has included group workshops and one-to-one mentoring on topics such as storyboarding, editing, and troubleshooting.

Check out our latest videos or subscribe to our channel at [https://www.youtube.com/user/OWL\\_Purdue](https://www.youtube.com/user/OWL_Purdue). Thanks to everyone who has contributed to OWL videos, including this year's video developers, Derek Sherman, Eliza Gellis, Ryan Buss, Tony Bushner, Joe Forte, Rachel Atherton, and Patrick Love.

## Presentation and Publications

Carrie Kancilia. "The Writing Lab as Community Resource: Staff Outreach at Purdue University." Presentation, ECWCA Conference, March 2017.

Vicki Kennell. "'I had to discard initial assumptions': Equipping writing center tutors with expertise in second language writing." Presentation, Symposium on Second Language Writing, October 2016.

Vicki Kennell and Amy Elliot. "Training tutors to work with L2 writers: Methods & materials, principles & practices." Presentation, IWCA Conference, October 2016.

Vicki Kennell and Beth Towle. "Review: *Tutoring second language writers*." Book review, *The Writing Center Journal*, 35(3).

## Current GTAs

Rachel Atherton—Rhetoric and Composition  
 Hadi Banat—Second Language Studies  
 Amy Elliott—Literary Studies  
 Gabriela Garcia—Creative Writing  
 Elizabeth Geib—Rhetoric and Composition  
 Maryam Ghafoor—Creative Writing  
 Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison—Rhetoric and Composition  
 Carrie Kancilia—Theory and Cultural Studies  
 Lindsey Macdonald—Rhetoric and Composition  
 Alex Mouw—Creative Writing  
 Eugie Ruiz—Rhetoric and Composition  
 Rebekah Sims—Rhetoric and Composition  
 Julia Smith—Theory and Cultural Studies  
 Anthony Sutton—Creative Writing  
 Beth Towle—Rhetoric and Composition  
 April Urban—Theory and Cultural Studies

## Current UTAs

Ara Adaramola—Chemical Engineering  
 Taylor Barnett—Computer Graphics  
 Mackenzie Chapman—Biology; Spanish  
 Sydney Dolan—Aerospace Engineering  
 Julia Donnelly—English  
 Adlina Fauzi—Chemical Engineering  
 Gail Fukumoto—Materials Engineering  
 Assem Imangaliyeva—Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences  
 Skye Li—Accounting  
 Logan Mahoney—Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences  
 Nathan McBurnett—Anthropology; Philosophy  
 Isha Mehta—Brain and Behavioral Science  
 Mina Mohsenian—Mechanical Engineering  
 Ashish Patel—Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering  
 Hetal Rathore—Aerospace Engineering  
 Zach Riddle—Mass Communication  
 Claire Shelby—Elementary Education  
 Henry Shi—Industrial Engineering  
 Austin Steinman—Mechanical Engineering  
 Martin Tuskevicius—Computer Science  
 Sydney Vander Tuin—Psychology; Creative Writing

## Current BWCs

Kayla Beland—Health Sciences (Pre-Professional)  
 Anisha Dutta—Management; Finance  
 Rebekah Jones—Professional Writing  
 Daniel Miller—Professional Writing  
 Jasmin Osman—Political Science; Professional Writing  
 Sarah Riddle—Management  
 Megan Smith—Professional Writing  
 David Spicer—Aviation Management  
 Evan Swasey—Management; Economics  
 Ellen Teske—Management  
 Haley Tow—Professional Writing  
 Grace Winn—English; Professional Writing





Tutors share a meal at our Fall 2016 end-of-semester potluck.

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## 40th Anniversary Fund & Other Gifts

In 1976, the Writing Lab was founded as a one-room space with only three consultants. Since then, we've expanded our space and our services and served as a model for an international community of writing centers and composition scholars. Your tax-deductible gift will help us better serve Purdue students on campus as beyond, as well as serve our global friends online who use the OWL (Online Writing Lab).

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Writing Lab 40th Anniversary Fund, or to the OWL, [click here](#).

You can also make checks payable to the Purdue Foundation, with either "Writing Lab 40th Anniversary" or "OWL (Online Writing Lab)" in the memo line. Checks should be mailed to the following address:

Purdue Foundation  
403 West Wood Street  
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2007

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*Our Alumni Annotations newsletter is published and emailed 2-3 times per year. If you are not receiving the Alumni Annotations newsletter as an email PDF file, and would like to or would like to contribute to our publication, please contact our secretary Chris Voeglein at [cvoeglei@purdue.edu](mailto:cvoeglei@purdue.edu).*