



mindfulness at the center

## Call for Proposals

In recent years the concept of mindfulness has entered institutions as a method to combat the increasingly chaotic modern world we live in--bringing attention to mental states and how they affect our action, daily lives, and overall feelings of fulfillment. As we see this impact within education, we seek to examine the effects within writing centers.

In "Preach What You Practice: Zen, Paradox, and a Few Kind Words for Writing Center Tutors" Jesse

Kavadlo advocates for Zen practices as a solution to the often paradoxical situations tutors are placed in such as the role of both a peer and authority, remembering techniques they have learned yet forgetting enough to remain in the moment, remaining distant but connecting to the student. Yet, mindfulness is not limited to the role of a tutor and student in a session. Directors must be mindful of the development of new tutors, the well being of current ones (which often does not exclude their personal lives), their role in the university, budgets, and much more. Even broader, we must be mindful of the culture of the writing center, its identity across campus and in the community, and how we reach students and faculty.

In the hectic balancing act of achieving success on all fronts, actions can become routine, losing their meaning and power, or burnout occurs, resulting in an avalanche of difficult circumstances. Being present in the moment has benefits that, as Elizabeth Mack and Katie Hupp (2017) note, are "clear to us all, but we also acknowledge[] the difficulty of making that happen given the many dynamics that contribute to a consultation, including the pressures of time, stress, and grades to name a few." Mindfulness is a solution—but is it realistic? Worthwhile? How do we implement it? Is it necessary? With little research delving into the roles of mindfulness in writing centers, the possibilities are not yet charted.

Considering the benefits of mindfulness in writing centers, the South Central Writing Centers Association invites proposals for the 2018 annual conference in Conway, Arkansas, February 22-24, hosted by the University of Central Arkansas. This year's theme "Mindfulness in the Writing Center" seeks to highlight the impact—documented or potential, positive or negative, observed or theorized—of mindfulness in our sites.

We welcome presentations of various format types: traditional conference paper read-alouds, panel presentations, workshops, roundtable discussions, and multimodal projects. Emphasis on audience interaction and participation are particularly encouraged. Proposals can be submitted by individuals or groups.

Please indicate your session type as part of your proposal:

- Individual Presentation (15 minutes)
- Panel Presentation (75 minutes)
- Workshop (75 minutes)
- Roundtable Discussion (75 minutes)

### **Deadline and Submission**

For your submissions, complete the [online application](#) by **December 15, 2017**. Acceptance notifications will be sent via email by **December 31st**.

### **Suggested Topic Areas**

We encourage proposals that incorporate the conference theme, though we will welcome proposals on any subject dealing with writing center work. Some possible topic areas include:

- How do we implement mindfulness practices in our centers?
- What are the connections between Zen practices and mindfulness in writing center theory/pedagogy?
- How do we encourage tutors to practice critical self-reflection without causing self-doubt?
- How can we train tutors to balance their roles (student and tutor)?
- How do we promote self-care in the writing center?
- How do we train tutors to be mindful of what a student needs and wants? What faculty need and want?
- How can tutors help students incorporate mindfulness into their writing processes?
- How do we encourage tutors to remain present in a tutoring session?
- How do administrators practice mindfulness in tutor training and supervision as well as daily writing center work?
- What role does mindfulness play in writing center identity in the University and community?
- How can writing centers be mindful of diverse populations?
- How does mindfulness play into the mental health of students and tutors?