

Fall 2021

Monroe Community College

"Colleges and universities are profoundly invested in human potential. Inherently linked to societal progress. Deeply interwoven in our cultural fabric. We have perhaps never needed them more as we look toward a changed but encouraging future. And we have to be the first to stand up and say it." —

Prof. David V. Rosowsky, University of Vermont, Inside Higher Ed



Comp Notes



Monroe Community College
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Composition Coordinator Receives Release Time

Look inside for updates, connections, musings on the following composition and rhetoric areas of interest:

- Campus Resource Highlights
- Committee Events & Partnerships
- Comp Conferences
- Composition Myths Debunked
- Comp/Rhet. Scholarship
- Faculty Spotlight
- News
- Poetry & Art
- Student Voices

Contributors include: Jacob Bodway, Amy Burtner, Meghan Glaser, Alice Wilson, and Yulanda McKinney.

After a semester of engaged research on current writing program administration in SUNY community colleges, I wrote and gained support for release to coordinate composition. This important role carves space for engaged conversation on composition at the college. As a central course in every single community college student's college career, what can composition do to support student success? This semester we're wondering:

Where do we find joy in teaching writing?

What can do we to offer the best possible supports for students?

This newsletter is a place to share tidbits of research, myths that confound and confuse, pilot projects and all things composition.

TYCA NE

Department colleagues in ENG/PHL from the Composition Committee plan to attend TYCA-NE virtually this year. Look for updates in the next newsletter on topics including OER texts, equity, linguistic diversity, advanced zoom features, and anti-racist pedagogy.

TYCA NE

TWO-YEAR COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION NORTHEAST

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

2021: An Educational Odyssey

Friday, October 15, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Featuring Keynote Speaker Carolyn Forché

Award-winning Poet of Witness, Human Rights Advocate, National Book Award Finalist

Pre-Conference Event / Virtual Happy Hour

Thursday, October 14, 2021

7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

Created by

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Faculty, English & Philosophy

Composition Coordinator 2021-2022

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WRITING PROGRAM
ADMINISTRATION
AND THE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

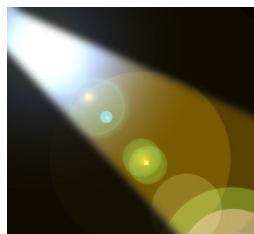
Heather Ostman



Welcome!

The Composition Committee welcomes you to join our conversations and workshops. The steering committee made up of ENG/PHL department colleagues meets once a month on Thursday afternoons via ZOOM. Want to work on composition related curriculum or learning activities together with your colleagues? All faculty across ENG/TRS are invited to join our Friday Salons. Please email for the ZOOM link.

Faculty Spotlight: Yulanda McKinney



It is important that we know who we are speaking to, who we most want to hear us, who we most long to move, motivate, and touch with our words.

--bell hooks

1. What's your favorite text to teach?

I have two: *Home to Harlem* by Claude McKay and "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson.

2. What's one thing you are grateful for during the pandemic?

GOD'S MERCY

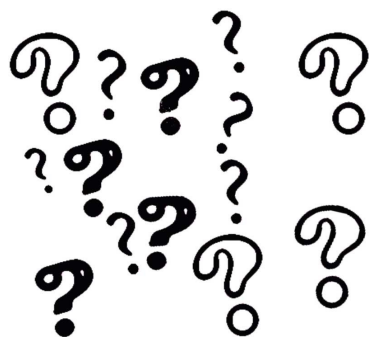
3. What are you involved in researching lately?

Having taught several semesters of cross-listed History/Sociology/English courses, in 2017 I started paying closer attention to the growing number of students who assumed little to no emphasis

at all would be placed on mechanics and form, but instead more on social and cultural connectivity and response. That fall, researching WRITING THEORY, particularly the role of theory in college writing and writing instruction, became my new project. Four years later, I'm still conducting research while working to conceptualize a first-year writing curriculum, instruction, and assessment pilot that directly addresses contemporary "ideas of writing" through specific socio-lens and the application of Lev Vygotsky's (1934) and Jean Piaget's (1936, 1950) cognitive development theories.

4. What's one image (words or jpeg?) that brings a smile to your face?

Any image of my incredible son with my five incredible grandchildren!



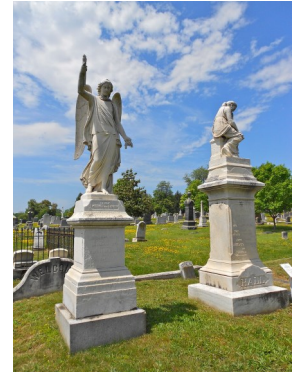
Hmm.... Got a Question?

Wondering about something composition-related lately? Like how much weight colleagues give to grammar and sentence structure? What are best practices in teaching the use of commas? Looking for a new text to share with students? Drop me a note at ajohnston@monroecc.edu. Ask a question and we'll come up with responses from fellow writing faculty.

The Composition Cemetery... Myths About Composition Debunked

Myth #1: If a student has taken ENG 101, or is taking it currently, then they should have already learned everything about writing essays...

While we all may wish that just one class can do everything, writing is a process. Student writing is a shared effort across the College, and needs continual reinforcement across all classes including future English courses as well as all of those in any and all pathways including liberal arts and humanities, social and hard science courses. As anything worth doing takes time, writing takes continual practice and revision to grow.



BAD IDEAS ABOUT WRITING

Edited by Cheryl E. Ball & Drew M. Loewen

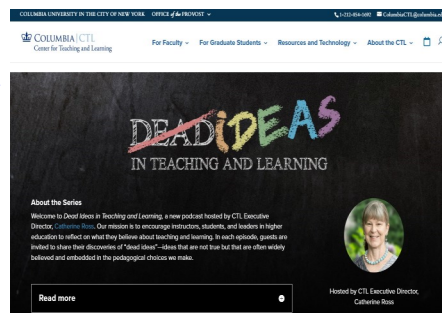


Modeled after the West Virginia University's OER called *Bad Ideas About Writing* and the Columbia University podcast titled "Dead Ideas in Teaching and Learning" this column will address common myths about composition and rhetoric. Check out the book or listen to the podcast for more.

Book: <https://textbooks.lib.wvu.edu/badideas/badideasaboutwriting-book.pdf>

Podcast: <https://ctl.columbia.edu/resources-and-technology/resources/podcast/>

Look for upcoming myths and responses. Want to send along one to share? Drop me a note.



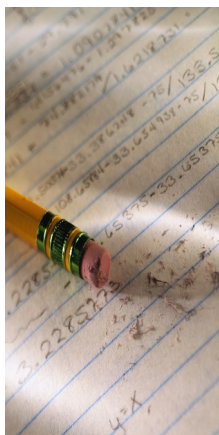
Human Expression is a cracked kettle on which we tap crude rhythms for bears to dance to, while we long to make music that will melt the stars.

—Gustave Flaubert

Academic Connections: Composition & Rhetoric Scholarship

Composition Professor Julie Lindquist asked a question at the 2021 conference on composition and communication that resonated: "If we are living in a time characterized primarily by loss, how might the experience of that, and the lessons we can't help but discover, deliver something like gains for the future? And: what is to be gained by understanding learning in terms of loss?... What does this question mean for us as writing teachers?" Her question was posed and pondered, as the zoom audience considered the theme of writing and teaching in a time of COVID. What lessons can we glean together as writing teachers doing the work day in and day out? How can loss be transformed into something like compassion? Many speakers across the country are engaging with this question as we all are.





“Composition should not be used as ‘pedagogical medicine.’”

--Roxane Gay, Yale University Comp Professor
April 2021 4Cs



Connect with ALP

ALP works. It successfully increases pass rates in ENG 101 based on data for the past few years right here at MCC. Many of us teaching it have noticed how teaching ALP influences teaching 101, and this column will be a placeholder to share those tips. Here's the first one—a link to the key principles that guide ALP:

<https://brazosport.edu/Assets/pdfs/writing-center/Key%20Pedagogic%20Features%20of%20ALP.pdf>

One is “utilizing backwards design.” Does this mean lots of discrete rote exercises on reading and writing? No. It's actually the opposite: ALP uses “just-in-time” learning. In ALP, “we ask students to read challenging texts...the major difference... is that they do it more slowly, with more support, more scaffolding” and at times more successfully than even their 101 peers. Want to learn more? Check out the link.

TILT, TAAC, GO! Pilot

In light of Composition Success rates over the past few years, the Composition Steering Committee will be working on a pilot. The three aspects include:

- Trying out the TILT method—a TCC guidance for rewording of assignments
- Explore Tutoring options and types of appointments with tutors for gateway course success
- Work aligning TAAC and ENG 101 assignments by sharing assignments, rubrics, and student-centered pedagogies *Drop me a line if you want to join us.*

Andrea Lunsford's New Composition Textbook

Stanford University's Andrea Lunsford is a beacon in composition. Studying nearly a thousand student papers, she set out with a colleague to discover if writers in the digital age read and write less than their predecessors. In her research entitled “Mistakes are a Fact of Life” she found that “kids today” *read and write more* than any group of students in history. Paper lengths in 2006 are double the typical lengths of those in 1986. Professor Emerita and former Director of the Writing Program, she's been Chair of the 4Cs and the MLA division on writing. Here new composition textbook *Let's Talk* just came out in Sept 2021 and I'm using it. It's focus is on listening and it uses examples from our grueling pandemic and current racial tensions to encourage composing as a practice of deep listening. Check it out. Copies are in Tina's office.

Partnership: ENG and ENT

Thank you to Meghan Glaser and Jay Keith for collaborating on a curriculum project with Engineering Technologies. After meeting with Tony Leuzzi, Angelique Johnston, Holly Wheeler, and folks in ENT, a partnership has been forged to create a contextualized ENG 101 to create a meaningful learning experience for students in certificate and associate's degree programs in Engineering Technologies.

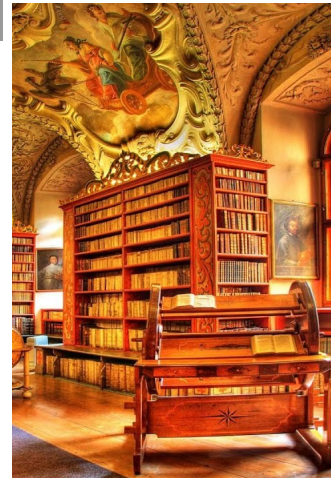
Highlight: Support for Students in the Library

Our fearless librarians Alice Wilson and Andrea Kingston are piloting a “Personal Librarian Program.” Would you like your students to have their very own librarian? If you haven’t checked it out yet, take a look. Here is info from the library:

What It Is: MCC Librarians Alice Wilson and Andrea Kingston are piloting a Personal Librarian program for specific cohorts of MCC students, such as incoming EOP students. We hope to also include all members of the Men of Excellence and the Women of Excellence starting in the Fall 2021 semester. The Personal Librarian program will provide students with a personal connection to the MCC Libraries. Our goal is to strengthen student retention and success by providing enhanced personal support for MCC students, thereby encouraging them to engage with library resources and services that will help them succeed academically.

How It Works: Think of a Personal Librarian as a student’s “go-to” person in the library. They become a familiar face, someone that the student can contact when they have a question about the library or a research assignment. Librarians will reach out to participating students as a group and individually to inform them about library resources and services. They will make connections with students via visits to group meetings (in-person or virtual), text messages, emails, in-person or virtual one-on-one assistance, and more.

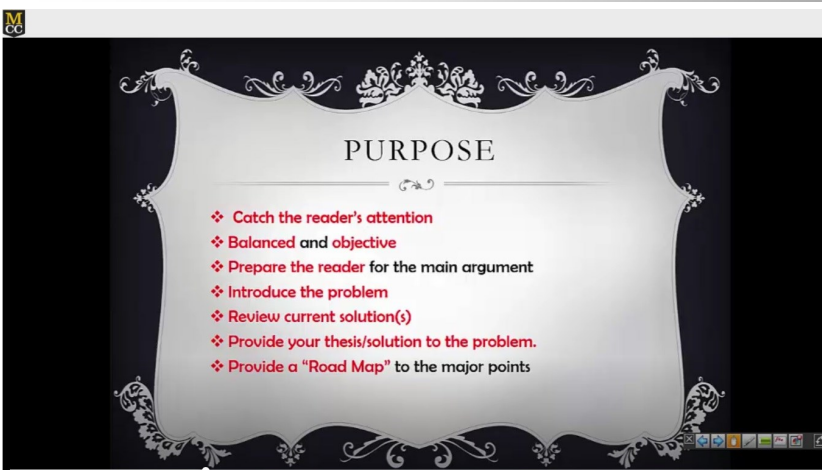
Contact Alice at the library at awilson@monroecc.edu for more.



Writing and
rewriting
are a
constant
search for
what it is
one is
saying.

-John Updike

Highlight: BB Video Can Be Imported Into Your Course



Jacob Bodway’s relevant and useful videos are available to support our course learning outcomes. Here’s one in ensemble on building a paragraph for a policy paper:



<https://ensemble.itec.suny.edu/Watch/t9ACf37M>

Book-Themed Art



Elizabeth Sagan arranges books to create artwork. She calls herself a “bookstagrammer.” Take a look: <https://mymodernmet.com/book-art-elizabeth-sagan/?fbclid=IwAR1URmFONTOxu5l2yRbo-wEVzx4TzSuA--a4luPGnKehE3jhHtHsykhEYE>

Good writers
define reality;

bad ones
merely

restate it.

—Ed Albee



“Given the neoliberal focus on efficiency and accountability and quantification, it can be difficult to imagine what it would be like to **embrace wellness boundaries** and a sense that what we have done is worthwhile and worth celebrating. However, the past year has illustrated that we really have no choice but to do so.”

--Elizabeth Wardle, 4Cs presentation, April 2021

Student Voices



On behalf of this past summer's College Readiness Council of Western NY, Jeremy Case created a video of our student voices. They were asked how they are faring during the pandemic. Listen here to what they shared:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZKCyFNQy-xrNJMqYtE7LLbGuTL3XnJaj/view>

The most common denominator? Compassion.

Poetry

Listening

by Dabney Stuart



Diamond and vinyl's an unlikely combination
 And yet the insensible needle
 Renders music from the mute grooves,
 Real revolution. Your intricate, fine-tuned
 Ear is no less rare, measuring
 Nothing as it rises into the air.

When you make music
 You sometimes touch such untold parts of yourself,
 Near the edges of everybody's time, that all sounds
 New again, as it can in our first hearing.
 Even Winter listens, and plans to blossom.

Singing's darkest seasons can
 Tease us into beginning, too, if we want;
 Unless the beautiful changes, you'll have to coax it
 Again and again out of the world's cold deafness,
 Releasing airs in
 To the settling air.



Composition at MCC can use your help! Please share what you can, when you can to make the newsletter informative and helpful as we aim to support our students.

Thank you!