

# PACIFIC VIEW

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Two Year College Association-Pacific Northwest Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2020

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## From the Chair

*Julie Swedin, Yakima Valley College*

Greetings in this new year and new decade! As we embark on the '20s, I would like briefly to recall the "Roaring Twenties" of our last century, which often are defined as an era of economic, cultural, and artistic change and growth.

We may picture both a flouting and redefining of traditions through the flappers with their bobbed hair, cigarettes, and short skirts, or the welcoming of the Jazz Age and the Harlem Renaissance. Both the famous and the infamous capture this age. Perhaps we envision such literary greats as Nella Larsen or F. Scott Fitzgerald, or our imaginations capture the Prohibition speakeasies kept in business by infamous bootleggers, such as Al Capone.

No matter what we see, this time was simultaneously invigorating and tumultuous with a shifting city landscape and more economic wealth and mass consumerism on the rise. Finally, cars, radios, and telephones connected us in ways not seen before, and social and political changes were underway. I recap this time in our country's history not only to pay tribute to our past but to think about what we want our age to represent. How will 2020 and this coming decade be defined by future generations?

Fittingly, the year is "20/20" and could be analogous to having a sharpness or clarity of vision at a distance. Just as having "20/20" indicates "normal" versus "perfect" vision, we too, as educators, can only see so far ahead.

However, arguably, to extend the metaphor just a bit longer, our peripheral awareness and depth perception should allow us to focus our eyes on what truly matters for our students.



Excitingly, our overall visual acumen could be enhanced with attending the upcoming national TYCA conference called "Transforming Our Profession for a Sustainable Future." The conference will be held this second year in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on March 25th and is offered in connection with CCCC 2020. [**Editors' Note:** *The national TYCA and CCCC conferences have been cancelled this year. The following information about the cancelled conferences has been retained as conference organizers may choose to include these speakers and events in the 2021 conferences.*]

The keynote speaker will be Matt Mendez, a writer of young adult novels, who poignantly offers us one portrait of what it means to grow up as a Mexican-American. Mendez is the author of the YA novel *Barely Missing Everything* and the short story collection *Twitching Heart*. According to his website, Mendez "earned his MFA from the University of Arizona where he also taught creative writing."

His work has appeared in *Pank*, *The Literary Review*, *Huizache*, and other places. Like the characters featured in the pages of his books, “Matt is from El Paso, Texas, but now lives with his wife and two daughters in Tucson, Arizona.” His most recent novel, *Barely Missing Everything*, has been described as a “heartbreaking, no-holds-barred debut novel told from three points of view [that] explores how difficult it is to make it in life when you—your life, brown lives—don’t matter.”

Another review by the award-winning author of *The House on Mango Street*, Sandra Cisneros, offers more praise: “Matt Mendez writes on target about people who are barely surviving in an America all too familiar to those who live on the borderlands. I thank him for making room for them on the pages of American literature. He has done so with respect, honor, and deep love.” Mendez clearly honors and speaks to the students of color we serve and the work we do at our community colleges as revealed by his own words captured on the 2020 TYCA Conference website: “Community Colleges are an open door of opportunity. Rooted in our neighborhoods, community colleges not only recognize the potential of every student but also how to nurture that potential. This is what makes them absolutely essential.” Lastly, there also will be a morning session at TYCA National featuring a welcome video from Mike Rose, renowned educational activist and widely published author of books and articles, such as *Lives on the Boundary*. Attending the national TYCA conference this March seems appropriately one avenue for both pedagogical enrichment and, as promised, a step towards “Transforming Our Profession for a Sustainable Future.”

Our regional TYCA-PNW conference, held on October 23-24th in Bellingham, Washington at Whatcom Community College, is fast approaching. The theme of this year’s conference is “Change that Matters.” Our newsletter contains the call for proposals that asks us to think about “how we are making or can make change that matters” for our students who may benefit from our reform of developmental education programs and placement processes and outcomes. However, as we are so acutely aware, more needs to be done to support the success of our historically vulnerable, marginalized, and underserved students.

Thus, I advocate for you to attend these conferences if you can. Ultimately, whether you plan to attend our national or regional TYCA conferences, 2020 is surely the beginning of a decade of us learning from each other. Perhaps this is a momentous time that will see us creating our own “Roaring Twenties” through gleaning insights into how to both transform and change our colleges for our students and possibly to ensure a clarity of vision that is more than 20/20 as we move forward.

Julie Swedin, Ed.D  
TYCA-PNW Chair

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# Change that Matters: *TYCA–PNW Conference 2020* Whatcom Community College, Bellingham, WA

## Call for Proposals

In the past decade or so, we have all witnessed and participated in numerous reform efforts and initiatives designed to make writing classes and programs more equitable and accessible. Many of us in the PNW have reformed developmental education programs, placement processes, and outcomes. And many of us have been working on reforming our assessment practices—from formative assessment on informal student writing to summative program assessment.



**Keynote Speaker Lisa Ede**  
**Professor Emerita**  
**Oregon State University**

We've made progress in opening our college-level classes to more students, especially those who have been historically marginalized, and we've improved success rates. However, gaps remain. We lose too many students who come to us with the hope of a college education, and a disproportionate number of them are the most vulnerable, historically underserved, those we wish to help most.

What can we do? What are we doing? What should we do?

In this gathering of TYCA-Pacific Northwest teacher-scholar-activists, let's consider how we are making or can make change that matters—real and effective change to the systems and practices that we create and perpetuate in order to serve our students. What systems, curricula (hidden and explicit), biases, and unspoken assumptions allow us to offer or bar us from offering equitable, accessible instruction to students? How have we shaped national research and initiatives to adapt to local conditions on the ground? How have we facilitated student involvement and collaboration? How can we collaborate with students more effectively to further our aims?

Let's gather to discuss change. To celebrate the changes we've made that matter. To evaluate and share the changes we're making now that we believe will matter. And to consider and begin to implement changes we have yet to make so that our teaching, our curricula, our assessment, and our programs matter in a positive way to all the students who make their way into our classrooms.

Join your friends and colleagues in Bellingham, Washington, next fall to share successes, failures, insights, and lessons learned.

## Questions to Consider

As you put together a proposal, here are some questions to guide your thinking. Note that we especially like active and interactive sessions, sessions in which people learn together. We would also love to see a large number of students at the conference! Bellingham's a great place to visit in the fall.

- How have student voices, student needs, and student interests driven pedagogical, programmatic, or curricular change that matters?
- How have we partnered with students to make change that matters?
- What pedagogical reforms, from large to small, have mattered most and why?
- What does social justice look like on the ground, in the classroom, to students, to faculty?
- What programmatic reforms have mattered most and what have been the challenges and rewards?
- What does systemic racism look like in a writing program, a writing center, a WAC program?



**Friday Speaker Xyan Neider, PhD**  
**Director, Teaching–Learning**  
**Center**  
**Whatcom Community College**

- How has antiracist writing assessment been implemented?
- What does culturally-responsive pedagogy look like in a basic writing, first-year writing, or second-year composition class?
- How has data driven change that matters? How about assessment?
- How have we revised curriculum and delivery to leverage online and hybrid modes of delivery so that we reach more students successfully?
- How has faculty engagement been spurred and maintained to foster change that matters?
- How has the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) spurred and augmented change that matters?
- How have constituencies across campus collaborated—writing centers, learning centers, writing programs, testing services, teaching and learning centers—to create change that matters?
- How have the needs of special populations—veterans, low-income students, International students—spurred positive change that matters?
- What do you wish you knew five years ago that you know now? How might that spur you to make changes that matter five years from now? What have students taught you that you otherwise would not have known?

**Proposals will be considered for a range of presentations—from 15 minute individual presentations, to 50-minute workshops, to poster presentations.**

**Submit 300-word proposals here: <https://tinyurl.com/r66anw6>**

**Proposals due Friday, April 10th, 2020! See you in Bellingham!**



# Pacific View

## Call for Submissions

Submissions for the following sections will be considered for the next issue:

- **Practical Matters**, specific classroom activities
- **Student Talk**, a student's perspective on learning
- **Professional Development**, ideas on developing self and/or others
- **Intersections**, thoughts on theory and/or philosophy of teaching
- **Creative Outlet**, a spot where colleagues can exhibit their creative side
- **Interactions**, addressing articles in the previous issue

Submissions can be short or long (but not dissertation long) and sent electronically to [ryanwitt@cw.edu](mailto:ryanwitt@cw.edu) or [alminervini@lcsc.edu](mailto:alminervini@lcsc.edu) as an attached document (preferably Word). Be sure to include your school affiliation along with your name, address, phone, and email. Please put TYCA or Pacific View in the subject line.



"Cascadia" by Cody Cobb CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0

Because of the variety of genres, we will accept an abstract or full piece for review. Abstracts are not required, particularly for smaller pieces.

Abstract deadline for spring/summer 2020: April 30th; Full piece deadline: May 31st; We will notify abstract submissions of their status no later than May 15th. We respond quickly.

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## TYCA-PNW Membership Information

Membership is usually paid via conference registration, but people who want to join or renew their membership and do not plan to attend the conference may do so by mail or electronically. An electronic form and payment option will be available soon at <http://tyca-pnw.org/>.

Mail membership should include Name, Home Address, College affiliation, Telephone, Email, Website (if applicable), and membership status to NCTE. Checks should be payable to TYCA-PNW. One-year membership is \$20 for full-time faculty, \$10 for students, part-time and retired faculty. Send payment and information to . . .

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# Folding Zines into the First-Year Composition Classroom

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Pierce College

Several years ago at a conference, a panelist in a session I was attending declared that zine culture was no longer impacting or driving cultural or social change. The panelist is not alone in believing this. Despite those who claim zine culture is, more or less, dead, zine fests are still taking place across the United States.

The integration of zines and zine culture in the classroom is not new. This is quickly and easily demonstrated by the *Small Science Collective* zine archive that can be found online. They can also be found in the first-year composition classroom. Zines can empower students to craft narratives and arguments by tapping into their various levels of creativity while helping to foster civic engagement, cultural competency and cultural humility, and ethics, as well as providing opportunities for students to think critically about research, document design, and audience.

## So, what is a zine anyway?

For those still wondering what exactly a zine is, zines are booklets or pamphlets typically made by hand and self-published. Oftentimes, zinesters, folks who make zines, aim for designs that can be easily photocopied en masse cheaply. These grassroots texts can be found in libraries, independent bookstores, feminist bookstores, community activism spaces, and leftist bookstores. They can be found online in digital formats ranging from scans of photocopies to digitally produced texts to audio and video zines.

Stephen Duncombe, in 1997, described zines as “scruffy, homemade little pamphlets. Little publications filled with rantings of high weirdness and exploding with chaotic design” (1). He elaborates that zines are “noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish and distribute by themselves” (6). Similarly, Alison Piepmeier defines zines as “quirky, individualized booklets filled with diatribes, reworkings of pop culture iconography, and all variety of personal and political narratives. They are self-produced and anti-corporate. Their production, philosophy, and aesthetic are anti-professional” (2). Though zines are “decidedly amateur” (Duncombe 18), zines can introduce students to key transferrable skills like self-publication, audience



“zine stack” by Rust Belt Jessie CC-BY-NC-ND 2.0

awareness, document design, integration of written and visual arguments, and synthesizing big ideas into concise, accessible bites.

## Why zines?

Using zines in the first-year composition classroom can provide an opportunity for students to learn about self-publishing, strategize about how to create their publication, and engage in collaboration with their colleagues and community. Self-publication has arguably gotten easier. While the internet has made self-publication via web text far easier, realistically, there are many people who have limited access to computers, mobile devices, and the internet. Electronic publishing is also less tangible for some. According to Jason Luther, “print is tactile, cheap, portable, immediately exchangeable, and often designed for reuse.” Moreover, learning how to self-publish on paper media can be empowering. Melanie Ramdarshan Bold notes that “the participatory nature of alternative media democratizes and progresses the consumption and production of cultural content” (217). As a teacher, I regularly encountered students who felt their voices were insignificant, and some had been told such repeatedly. Zines can provide an opportunity to support students in creating a space to share their thoughts, ideas, research, and more importantly, their voices.

Self-publishing means that students can choose their own audience based upon the topic of their zines and the ideas being conveyed. Alex Wreck in *Stolen Sharpie Revolution* urges zinesters to “Think about your audience—think about who you want to read your zine as you go through things you

have written. How do you make your writing interesting to those people? ... Even if you are creating a comic or art zine, this is an important consideration.” When teaching first-year composition, I likely uttered the words “think about your audience” daily. Zines can provide a fantastic opportunity for the exploration of audience and the development of audience awareness because students have to consider how to make their writing accessible to their audience, decide which ideas are most important, synthesize information, and tailor the information for a specific audience. Though tricky, the task seemed to help some students codeswitch between academic writing and non-academic writing. In one version of the zine assignment, I asked students to remix a more formal argument into a zine. Students then had to renegotiate who their intended audience should be, how to best engage their audience, and how to navigate the most imperative information to include in their zine. Students also had to determine how best to cite their sources. Was APA appropriate for their zine or MLA? Or would it be more appropriate to give credit in another way?

Further complicating the consideration of the audience was the need to consider the overall design of the zine. Students had to develop a strategy for appealing to their audience and building their ethos while attending to document design and how they would integrate visuals and text strategically. Wreck encourages zinesters who are using images in zines to “try to make them pertain to what is written about, it can add to the overall mood of the writing” (19). Over the years, I have spent countless hours talking about document design and what different designs convey to audiences. Though powerful, word processors can sometimes act as a barrier when discussing document design; using the common method of cutting out and gluing printed, physical bits of text and image can facilitate richer conversations about design elements and implications. For instance, when a student is crafting a zine and cuts a block of typewritten text out and glues it into the zine, the student has to now consider where the image(s) go, what comes next, what came before. The block of text that would have simply been a paragraph in a more traditional essay genre is now a potential obstacle to work around.

Another layer of the conversations about document design is the potential expense of printing large, lengthy, colorful zines. Throughout the zine projects, I have students compose reflections about their experiences, the process they use to make particular decisions, and the like. Students are more than welcome to create elaborate and colorful zines, but they must come up with an economical method for printing and/or distributing the zine.

Though there are a few sticky points associated with document design, one awesome benefit of engaging in the discussion of design and thinking through design before gluing anything down is the ability for students to physically storyboard and move text, images, and other elements around. They can experiment with different organizations, structures, and layouts, making discussions of organization more tangible experiences. I found that students tended to get really engaged in the process of moving text and images around to create a particular tone and to highlight particular ideas. The maneuvering of text also provided opportunities to

[Z]ines can be a method of introducing students to key transferrable skills like self-publication, audience awareness, document design, integration of written and visual arguments, and synthesizing big ideas into concise, accessible bites.

take a deeper dive into composing transitions between ideas.

A sticking point, sometimes, was revision, particularly for students who got zealous and glued text, images, and other elements down immediately. For these students, scissors, paper, and other such materials were there to save the day. Throughout the process, I had students share and discuss their zines. We workshopped zines near daily, working and reworking the content, then reworking the organization of the content, then reworking the layout of the content, and repeating in various patterns until students were content with their zines. Discussions of revision took on a slightly new meaning for some students because they were actually able to re-vision their zines and see the impact of the changes immediately. Sometimes the impacts of revisions in more traditional modalities are more difficult to observe.

### **My experiences with zines in the classroom**

I have assigned zines in classes five terms (a few semesters and a few quarters). Several of the assignments were collaborative assignments. The collaborative zines posed a

number of challenges, including engagement of all team members, agreement upon a topic, agreement upon how to approach a topic, agreement upon design, and efforts to cooperate rather than collaborate. These challenges were not unexpected. With each individual class, and even with individual groups within the class, we developed plans for navigating the challenges. Only in one instance were the challenges so great that the group disbanded and worked independently. While the collaborative zines were a “major project,” the bulk of the points were in written reflections, peer reviews, evaluations, and other written assignments associated with the collaborative zines.

Given the nature of zines, just about any genre can become a zine. The genres explored in the assignments have varied from informative to profiles to reviews to arguments. I very intentionally did not assign narrative zines. Daniela Capistrano provides a valuable anecdote about how such zines can potentially negatively impact students on the *POC Zine Project* blog. At no point in any of the assignments did I urge students to integrate their own personal stories into the zines. Though some students opted to, this was not a requirement nor was it a part of the grading criteria. Perzines, or personal zines, are a very particular genre of zine that make the already complex task of grading zines even more complicated.

Grading zines can be tricky; the key is clear grading criteria. After the first time I assigned zines in my first-year composition classes, I shifted the weights of the grades associated with the project. Rather than most of the points being wrapped up in the zine, the grade is more evenly distributed between the zine and the other written assignments associated with the zine, including planning, reflections, peer reviews, and evaluations. I assigned reflections throughout the project, as well as a post-project reflection. I also assigned multiple rounds of peer reviews, each round using a different method for peer reviewing. The last time I used zines in my classes, I guided students through the creation of rubrics and a grading schema for the associated assignments, and graded using what they had collaboratively created. I spent the early portion of the quarter working with students on criteria, evaluating using criteria, developing criteria to use for evaluation, and the like in order to scaffold into the collaborative development of the rubric.

In addition to creating the zines, we spent a lot of time reading

and researching zines. I was mindful not to decontextualize zines. As such, we explored the activist, punk, RiotGrrrl, and social justice roots of zines. We studied print and digital versions of zines throughout the project (and some during projects that preceded the zine project). We looked at models of zines that were in the same genre of the project assigned and evaluated them based upon the assignment criteria—this proved incredibly helpful for testing the collaborative rubric students created.

I wanted students to think about what they were doing, why they were doing it, how it would impact their audience, and how it would impact the design and distribution (though students were not required to distribute their zines).

I ultimately erred on the side of too much flexibility. Given the nature of zines, I did not want to provide such inflexibility that students could not explore the modality due to a fear of negatively impacting their grades. Students could opt to handwrite, typewrite, cut and paste words, or whatever other creative approach they had, but they had to explain their rationale in their reflection(s) on their process. I wanted students to think about what they were doing,

why they were doing it, how it would impact their audience, and how it would impact the design and distribution (though students were not required to distribute their zines). I also wanted students to consider how they were using visuals, what visuals they were using, the organization of the text, and the structure of the zine (for example: a mini zine made from one page, folded half-page zines stapled together, 8x11 zines stitched together, digital zines). The same went for whether students opted for using paragraphs, bullets, or a combination of the two. We explored the impact of flowing text, broken text, bullets, and the like, and reviewed models using various approaches. We also discussed how to synthesize material and sought out examples of wonderfully succinct, but impactful syntheses of ideas in other texts and in zines. We discussed mic drop moments and what it is that makes them mic drop moments. I asked students to identify such moments in the texts we read in class and in texts they found related to their topics, explicitly teaching about the obstacles different approaches could present and ways to work around them. Then we looked at various models that helped support students in making decisions about how to design their zines. So long as students were contemplating *why* they were doing what they were doing and *how* it would impact their ethos, the audience’s reception, and the overall conveying of their arguments/



ideas, and could evaluate and provide a rationale for those design choices in our conversations and in their reflections throughout the project, I maintained flexibility.

The biggest drawback I encountered using zines in the first-year composition classroom was not so much in the classroom (though now and again a student “just [didn’t] get it”) as it was with colleagues on campus and in the field who reject zines as a valid form of writing and/or creation. An instructor outside of my department once asked me, “So a student can take your writing class and never write?” when I was talking about my use of multimodal assignments in my classes. I’d argue that students in my classes tend to write more because of my use of multimodal assignments. I ask students to engage in planning, drafting, reflecting, revising/re-visioning, providing feedback to peers, and evaluating throughout the process. Students write every day, granted not all of the writing is high stakes.

Zines can empower students to craft arguments by tapping into their various levels of creativity while helping to support civic engagement, cultural humility, and ethical behavior. Zines also provide a wide variety of mediums through which students can exercise various skill sets, including writing, critical thinking, research, document design, audience awareness, remixing, and teamwork.

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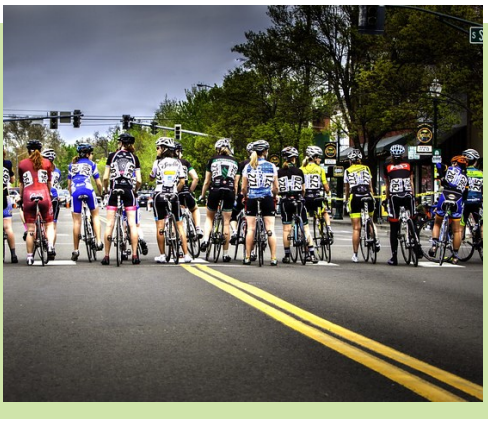
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“Snake River Sunrise,” by Curtis Fry CC-BY-NC 2.0



“Tour of Walla Walla,” by Dick\_Morgan  
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# Recognize the Spark in Promising Undergraduate Research

Sheighlyn Griego  
Lewis-Clark State College

Hands trembling, I read over my notes one final time. The tension in the room was so thick, coupled by anxious thoughts: “Could I do this?” “Have I prepared enough?” With one last deep breath, I exhaled and whispered to myself, “I can do this.”

Here I was at my first regional conference, nine months of hard work culminating into one final presentation. Looking out among the sea of strange faces eager to learn and hungry for knowledge, I willed myself to deliver...not just for me but for my kids, too. As a nontraditional student and mother of two, I pushed back against my fear of rejection. And as I began to speak, the words began rolling off my tongue just like I had practiced several times in my living room in front of two moody teenage boys. After the first few minutes of my delivery, I felt like a well-oiled machine, pumping out information into one cohesive presentation. And that left me wondering, were my initial fears misguided? Perhaps.

The Northwest Undergraduate Conference in the Humanities at North Idaho College (Coeur D’Alene, ID) was my first chance to celebrate my academic achievements in a formal setting. The idea was prompted by the encouragement from a supportive writing professor who saw a spark in me. She recognized a potential beyond more than just a student in a requisite composition course and urged me to capitalize on my capabilities that I hadn’t realized as a first-year writer. After having returned to higher education later in life, nudges like these were important because they pushed me out of my comfort zone and directly into the annals of academia.

Presenting at a regional conference enabled me to push past my own limitations, surrounded by other budding researchers and creative writers who were just as eager as me to grasp new concepts and feel inspired by innovative ideas. Standing up in front of a group of students beyond the peers in my classroom was new territory for me and facing critical questions to my research was also something I had never experienced before.

Throughout this process, I was able to gain fresh perspectives

on a project that I had spent months on, a paper that I thought I knew inside and out. Tediously revising my research paper was daunting at times. Even when I thought I had it right, I went back to the drawing board on multiple occasions. Little did I know I was getting a taste of the rigors of the peer review process by having my ideas constructively critiqued. Tamping back frustration, I pushed on and flexed my critical thinking skills in an effort to propel my work to its absolute best. Just when I thought that I could not take any more roadblocks, my professor was able to help me realize that I could do it, cheering me on by offering a sympathetic ear and guided mentoring.

*From the congratulations letter to the presentation to the final applause, I was able to transform into something more than just a student in the classroom.*

The conference experience filled me with a burst of confidence that no grade could have ever provided. It gave me the satisfaction that I could do whatever I set out to achieve academically. From the congratulations letter to the presentation to the final applause, I was able to transform into something more than just a student in the classroom. I was able to take firsthand what I had been learning through coursework and apply it in a real-life setting, gaining new skills that I could take with me throughout the rest of my college career.

What I was reminded of is that students—whether they are nontraditional like myself or fresh out of high school—need challenges. They need to be gently pushed out of their comfort zones to accomplish something they may not have set out to do on their own.

Would I do it again? Absolutely! My only hope is that my peers get the same opportunities that I did to showcase their research or class projects. Will you be the next enthusiastic professor who takes the chance on them, enabling them to parlay their potential in the classroom and apply those skills in a formal setting? The TYCA-PNW Conference in October 2020 would serve as a great platform for helping students to hone their professional portfolio and celebrate their accomplishments.

# Flexibility, Accessibility, and Kindness: Connections in the Classroom

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For the past few semesters, I have been experimenting with opening up how my class is accessible to students. I have been thinking about this not only in light of the ADA requirements but in how students can engage with my class without declaring a differing ability. As a result, I have relaxed several class policies, including attendance, assignment due dates, technology, and late-work policies. I work to find the balance between accomplishing the goals and outcomes of the class without sacrificing the rigor of college writing and providing choices for students to utilize the methods that work best for them.

I teach first-year writing at a small, public college with a large number of first-generation and commuter students. Our campus provides educational opportunities ranging from trade certificates to bachelor's degrees. Our students' goals are diverse, as some are here to finish up the degree that they have done by piecemeal at a half-dozen colleges, those who simply want the trade certificate to move on to the job market, and those who want to go to graduate school.

Ever since reading the article "Give the Kid a Pencil" by middle school teacher Chad Donohue (2016), where he argues that there are so many issues that may prevent a student from being prepared for class, I started thinking about the problems that arise for college students. What can I give students that would impact their success in the course and, in fact, make their lives a little easier, as well as mine since I am not agonizing over these policies?

What I have been working with is flexibility. Flexibility with deadlines. Flexibility with assignment submissions. Flexibility with methods of submission. Flexibility with everything, except the high standards. How can I be flexible with my class policies still fulfill my goals and outcomes?

First, I needed to figure out my goal. My goal is for students to be competent in college writing. If they want to be more than competent in the class, they will need to work at it, but to pass, to be able to move on? There can be a range of experiences. Drawing on the research of Asao B. Inoue (2019) on assessment and grading contracts, I have thought about what students need to accomplish in order to pass the course, and also for students

who want a grade higher than a C. As a result, I have used Inoue's philosophy with grading contracts to develop clear pathways for students to be able to pass my first-year writing class as well as those who want to excel. I have decided that the efforts towards a final grade are best left up to the student. Inoue has provided an excellent discussion on labor-based contracts in his 2019 book *Labor-Based Grading Contracts: Building Equity and Inclusion in the Compassionate Writing Classroom*, which outlines the philosophy and implementation of labor-based grading. For my focus here, I want to think about providing flexibility for students whose goal is to pass first-year writing.

One policy that is fraught with challenges is attendance. Over the past few years, I have experimented with different guidelines for attendance, and as of four years ago, I removed the attendance requirement completely. In place of my attendance policy on the syllabus, I argue the benefits of coming to class. I discuss the help they will receive from me in class, the writing we will do, and my evidence that students who attend class tend to earn higher grades. I share the experiences students will have in my class to help make a case for attendance. Why have I decided on this policy? Because of mental and physical health problems, child-care, parent-care, working 30-40 hours a week just to afford school, and finally exhaustion from a combination of these issues. Because of life. I figured if a student can complete the work and do it at a college-level, why shouldn't they get credit for that?

The question many people ask is how the policy change impacted attendance? Very little, if at all. I have about the same attendance than if I had a strict attendance policy. The only



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difference is that the few students who might have been failing due to attendance are now passing. That means a student can stay in school another semester to figure things out. For me, the benefit is I do not have to keep close tabs on the students who come to class. I do not need to have a reason for a student's absence. I take roll in order to learn student names and track to see patterns in how well students do in class or as an alert if I have not seen a student in a while. While this policy impacts

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students' ability to complete in-class work, I accept late work digitally, as well as on paper. The students who achieve A or B grades in the class complete their homework on time, come to class ready to talk with me

about their current writing assignment. I give instant feedback on their ideas, helping them move forward with their writing. Successful students also take advantage of the writing time in class. Students have the opportunity to start the next part of their assignment in class. They can ask questions that might prevent them from finishing their homework. On average, C students and below may or may not attend class regularly and are usually doing the minimum to get by.

I have wavered on having students submit everything in hard copy or everything submitted digitally, and every semester there is a problem for some students. While there are some students whose internet does not work at home in our rural state, most of my students do not have easy access to a printer and must pay quite a bit to print at the library. The answer for me is to accept prewriting exercises and in-class work, however they can get it to me. Students have the option to submit their work digitally (either on the campus LMS or through a dedicated Google folder), whether it is a photo of a handwritten assignment or uploaded as a Word or PDF file. Students can type in-class work on their laptop, tablet, or phone; they can take a photo of handwritten notes to be uploaded; or they can turn in the handwritten assignment on paper. While I have traditional, fixed guidelines for rough and final drafts, most other prewriting assignments can come in whichever form works for the students. The majority of students type up their work, but there are still a few who prefer to handwrite their ideas first.

The use of digital technology for writing has led to me thinking about my policy on digital technology in the classroom. While inappropriate use can be distracting for teachers and the students, I have moved from banning all digital technology to allowing it all, with mixed results. Again, I pose the argument to the students using research and personal choice. If I am allowing students to submit work with any device, then they need their devices — all of them. I start the semester with the “best use” policy in the syllabus. I suggest that students have a dictionary and the Wikipedia app on their phone—a dictionary app to look up words (I will frequently ask students to define words in class) and Wikipedia to settle bets (not literal bets, but those debates on when a story was published, who was the star of a film, or if the Lakers won their basketball game last night—all essential facts to settle in class). Some of my students use their phones to submit work, because, for some, it is the only digital technology they have.

I do share with students the research data on how handwriting is better for remembering (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014), and that every time they pick up their phone, it takes twenty-three minutes to get their head back into what they are doing. For this reason, it is best to let that text message go until after class (Mark, Gudith, & Klocke, 2008). Faced with this new-found knowledge, students will voluntarily put their phones away if they were not needed—most of the time. But I also mention if they would rather watch a YouTube video or play video games, they might as well not be in class. And (usually) when I give students these choices, they listen.

Finally, I want to consider my late work policy. I have always had a problematic relationship with late work policies. Even when I had a no-late-work policy, I always offered extensions and, in an effort to be fair, allowed late work for all of my students. Why create stress for everyone, including myself? I have just decided to accept late work. Yes, there are penalties for late work, but they are not extreme. No one can fail my class because of late work, unless it is really too late. I do remind students that there is the end of the semester, and there needs to be a reasonable amount of time to get work graded. I have tried allowing students to turn in all classwork late. The downside is I received work that was completed too late to be effective, such as prewriting activities for an essay that had already been submitted. I moved to flexible-but-fixed deadlines for prewriting, and once the final draft of the essay had been submitted, the submission of prewriting activities close. I offer more opportunities for prewriting activities—choose their own adventure, where students can choose from a buffet of options for prewriting. I allow extra credit for using more than one prewriting activity. In

By changing these policies, I have avoided requests for extensions, having to negotiate an excused or unexcused absence, and students feeling like they have too much work. I am able to take the issues that are the most contentious for me, alleviate the suffering for all involved, and instead treat my students and myself with kindness.

allowing for limited late work and a variety of options to get prewriting done, students can maintain a passing grade and sometimes even excel as they develop their confidence with writing.

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kindness. If I do have these discussions with overwhelmed students, I can remind them that there are ways that they can pass the class. And I remind myself that in the end, my goal is for students to have the ability to write at the college level, regardless of how they can get there. Their final grade is up to them.

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The Lisa Ede Teaching Excellence Award is given to instructors who exhibit teaching excellence. Named for longtime Oregon State University English professor, Lisa Ede, the award is given annually.

To nominate a colleague and for more information, please visit the TYCA-PNW Lisa Ede Award webpage: <http://www.tyca-pnw.org/lisa-edo-award>.

Previous winners include Jeffrey Klausman (Whatcom Community College; Bellingham, WA), Peter Jensen (Lane Community College; Eugene, OR) and Joy Clark (Yakima Valley College; Yakima, WA). When asked to reflect on her 2011 award, Clark had this to say:

I began teaching English Composition at Yakima Valley College in January 2008, having been hired less than three weeks prior to the beginning of the term. As many of you know, there is a specific kind of pressure when you teach as an adjunct, since continued employment is not guaranteed, and the insecurity around that creates a need to be superhuman and to perform at exceptional levels—always. I was blessed with generous colleagues who supported me, cheered me on and counseled me, and I had a job I loved, so the pressure was almost bearable! It was still there though, and in the early years I worked—well, a LOT of long hours—and served students as well as I possibly could, not knowing whether that work would continue to be available to me. Off my radar was the fact that a colleague nominated me to receive an award. In October 2011, at the TYCA-PNW conference held at Yakima Valley College, I was surprised to receive the Lisa Ede Teaching Excellence Award. Getting that award gave me validation and reassurance that my life's work was recognized. While it did not remove pressure on me, the award gave me a new way to understand how to face the pressure I felt. It gave me renewed energy and helped me to keep my sense of purpose firm.

The Lisa Ede Teaching Excellence Award might keep one of your colleagues on a path they need to be on. Please consider—when you see the opportunity—nominating one of your colleagues to be honored and validated. It is worth the time it takes to submit the nomination. It will matter for years to come.

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