

MARC Workshop

4Cs and Beyond: Writing a Successful Proposal for Regional and National Conferences in Rhetoric and Composition

Sample Conference Proposals

Narrating Change: (Re)Negotiating Academic and Workplace Cultures

(Panel Proposal with Two Speakers—Submitted to Association for Teachers of Technical Writing Conference)

Much has been written about the transition students undergo when moving from academic to workplace cultures. We know very little, however, about the “double” transition practicing technical communicators undergo when they decide to pursue an advanced degree in technical communication while at the same time continuing in their careers as technical communicators. How do practicing technical communicators (re)negotiate entry into academic culture? And how do these same technical communicators (re)negotiate entry into their own workplace environments? Our panel argues that such transitions are particularly complicated, characterized by shifts in identity, altered relationships with fellow students, professors, co-workers, and supervisors, and changed writing processes and practices. Both panelists draw upon data from separate qualitative case studies with practicing technical communicators who are also MA students in technical communication: Speaker 1...Speaker 2...

Tales from the Field: A Descriptive Study of Narrative Talk in Writing Center Consultations

(Individual Proposal—Submitted to International Writing Centers Association Conference)

In "Taking Narrative Seriously," Susan Chase reminds us that people are storytellers by nature, that it is through the "complex social process" of narration that we "make sense of experience, construct and communicate meaning" (1). "Taking narrative seriously" means attending—carefully and critically—to the stories we and others tell, to the forms these stories take, the roles they play, and the cultural work they perform. As Chase explains, when we analyze narrative in specific instances, we discover, among other things, "the kinds of narratives that are possible for certain groups of people, and we learn about the cultural world that makes their particular narratives possible—and problematic—in certain ways" (20). Writing centers are rich in narrative talk—one consultant tells another consultant the story of her most recent tutoring session, a writer narrates the difficulties he's having writing a paper, a consultant responds to the writer with a story of her own about overcoming writer's block—yet few studies have examined the *nature* of the narratives that take place in writing centers, in particular the narrative talk that takes place between writers and consultants. This paper begins such an exploration, using transcripts of writing center consultations to examine the kinds of stories that get told in writer-consultant conversations, and the functions this narrative talk performs. I plan to conclude by speculating on the ways in which we might self-consciously revise stories to reshape our experiences and identities.